

Week ending December 29 1951 Wednesday Fourpence

John Bull

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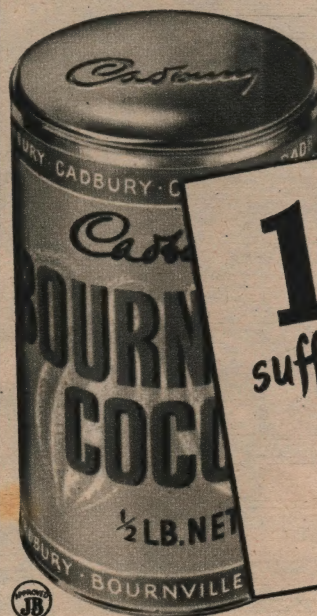


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O.K.

THE SAUCE

THAT DOES YOU GOOD

EDITORIAL

Can we afford to slash the welfare budget?

AS 1951 ENDS, the future of the Welfare State is seen to be one of the outstanding issues of the New Year.

All political parties are committed in principle to continuing it. The question is whether it shall be continued on the present scale or whittled down, at least temporarily.

The clash is between those who see it as an essential part of the nation's economic fortifications, and those who still regard it as something of a luxury, which should be reduced in hard times. Against the latter it may forcibly be argued that they fail to see the national picture as a whole.

Britain's first problem, now and always, is to sell her goods abroad at competitive prices. Our living and our hopes depend entirely on that. Anything which reduces our capacity to manufacture and export British goods is going to harm us in the long run. Remembering this, let's look at what would most probably happen if the social benefits of the Welfare State were abandoned, or severely reduced.

"Welfare," under the present system, consists mainly of pensions, family allowances, free education with cheap school meals and milk, the Health Service, unemployment insurance and other industrial benefits, and the food subsidies.

It is the food subsidies which are most generally recommended for a first scaling-down, or even for scrapping. They cost £400,000,000 a year and are worth 3s. 2d. a week to everyone in the land.

Opponents of the subsidies prove on paper that by stopping them and substituting, to protect children and old people, higher family allowances and pensions, the Government could save a lot of money.

Such sums look attractive from the point of view of a Chancellor of the Exchequer. If he cuts £100,000,000 off the subsidies, he puts up the cost of living by about 9d. a week per head. If, to offset this, he increases the annual pension bill of £195,000,000 by £40,000,000 and the annual family allowances of £65,000,000 by £30,000,000, he is apparently left with a Budget gain of £30,000,000.

But this calculation assumes that nobody needs "protecting" from higher food prices except pensioners and parents of two or more children. It would leave one-child families, the childless and the unmarried either with a lowered standard of living or

an urgent need for more money. And, of course, they would soon demand more money, in wages and salaries.

Such a demand would be impossible to resist in a time of full employment. Therefore, rises would be awarded to these people, and would eventually go also to the people who were getting the higher family allowances and to working pensioners. So prices would be forced up once more—and although the Chancellor might have gained £30,000,000, the nation's world trading position would have been further weakened.

EDUCATION is another target of those who attack the Welfare State. It is easy for them to make out some case for economies in a system which can never show any cash profits. You can lower the school-leaving age, raise the entry age, save on buildings and equipment, hold down teachers' salaries.

But think of the long-term effect on the sources of Britain's prosperity. We are a nation which must live on its brains. In raising the general level of practical intelligence lies our hope of survival. From our schools there must come a greater, not a smaller, flow of well-educated young people to fill the exacting jobs of tomorrow. The lowering of our educational standards does not look so good from this point of view.

Then what about the Health Service? Surely here is one field where saving would not upset the national economy? Certainly there are ways in which the outflow of money might be reduced. A charge for prescriptions—which was authorized by Parliament but never put into force—is one.

But the hard core of the Health Service is the hospitals, and they need more money, not less. Any new revenue from prescriptions ought to be passed on to them, not to the Exchequer. For it would be false economy to weaken our defences against disease and our remedies against injury. That would be sure to cause a huge loss of manpower.

On all these major sectors of the Welfare State it is clear that cuts which would be "worth while" to the Budget would be deeply harmful to the industrial effort which keeps everything going.

Unless we are very foolish indeed, we shall be careful not to treat the social services as a luxury—or as a "Party" matter—realizing that the survival of Britain depends more than ever on the welfare of the people.

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FREE SPEECH

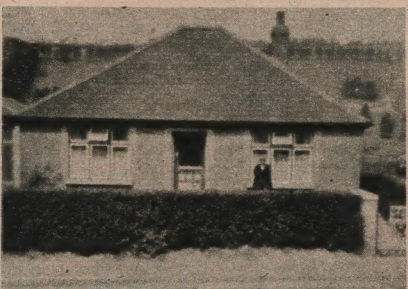
A farmer's unwelcome visitors

NOWADAYS, ONE HEARS of little else but the shortage of manpower. Yet I am a farmer and every day I and my neighbours are pestered by travellers, selling all kinds of stuff. It must cost huge sums to keep these useless armies passing and repassing each other on the roads.

One afternoon, while pulling sugar beet, we had three men call, all selling lime and all twenty years younger than my father who, at the time, was topping the beet.—YOUNG FARMER, Yorkshire.

Built His Own House

BEING THE FATHER of six children and having no home, I decided that I should have to build my own. That was in 1921. I bought a plot of ground and in 1926 set about drawing a plan for a bungalow. The plan was passed, although I am no architect or builder, and I started digging the foundations, working all my spare time. In 1930 we



moved into our much admired bungalow, free from all debt, the cost having been paid out week by week as the work went on. The bungalow [see photograph] has five large rooms, a bathroom and a garage, all brick built with cavity walls.—W. H. VARDON, Bryn-awel, Bosney Banks, Lydden, Devon.

Mother's Call Helped

NOT ALL NURSES would agree with your correspondent who wrote that it does more harm than good for parents to visit their children in hospital ("Free Speech," December 8). Our two-year-old son was taken to hospital with suspected infantile paralysis. After five weary weeks, he was still limping badly. There was a strict "no visiting" rule, but a kindly nurse allowed me to see him. He hobbled down the ward, beaming, and, turning round, shouted: "I've got my mummy back!" Next time the doctor saw him, he was so pleased with the improvement that I was allowed to see the child daily, and within ten days he was home, walking normally.—MRS. M. HAMMOND, 60 Moscow Road East, Edgeley, Stockport, Cheshire.

Before The Canoe Raid

STRANGER THAN FICTION was your latest true story of the war, "Operation Frankton" (JOHN BULL, December 8-15). Two weeks before this daring raid began, I was navigator in one of six Mosquitoes sent to attack two blockade runners penned in the Gironde. We attacked them from low level, and I still have part of the aerial from one of the ships which wrapped itself round

our starboard engine. I wonder whether this attack, so shortly before the canoe raid, could have been the reason for the alertness of the estuary's defences.—A. W. DEAN, 97 Alexandra Road, Parkstone, Dorset.

... The submarine *Tuna*, which took part in Operation Frankton, eventually came to the yard where I am employed to be broken up. I was one of those who worked on her.—J. BLIGHT, 70 Olive Branch Crescent, Briton Ferry, Glamorgan.

Puzzling Writing

AS A postal worker who handles mail every day, I think handwriting in general is very poor. A surprising number of letters find their way into the "blind" box through the writing being illegible. Government departments are no exception. They are usually the worst culprits, although a candidate's handwriting must surely be considered in any Civil Service examination.—W. R. CURRIE, 49 Locksley Gardens, Belfast.



Homing Fish

IN A POND IN MY GARDEN I have a small carp, and when the cold weather came I thought it wise to provide some shelter. Seeing an old cow horn lying nearby, I gently placed it in the water, with the open end downwards. To my surprise, the carp has made a regular habit of retiring to the horn at night. In the morning, my first job is to lift the horn and empty out my homing carp, and away he swims to his daytime haunt—the sunken apple tree leaves.—C. R. FLINT, 131 The Lane, Wyboston, Beds.

Community Chest Flaws

ONE OF YOUR READERS asked when Britain would adopt the American system of the Community Chest, instead of having separate collections for charities ("Free Speech," October 27). My answer is that I hope Britain will never accept this system. The director appointed each year to supervise the drive is paid far in excess of what the job is worth. Too many people are employed all the year round to administer the scheme. There is too much coercion of employees of various firms

to give a day's pay, and recipients of grants from the fund are often asked searching personal questions. It works badly and it is better for people to give to the charity they think most deserving.—FRED W. GREBBELL, 2812 West Sixty-Ninth Street, Seattle, U.S.A.

Getting Rid Of Gossip

LET ME GIVE A TIP to the Croydon shopkeeper who finds his trade spoilt by gossiping women standing in front of his doorway ("Free Speech," December 8): take out a broom and, with a polite "Excuse me," start sweeping the pavement.—SHOPKEEPER, Sheffield.

... Stand in the doorway and pretend to be gazing up and down the street. The gossipers think you are trying to listen to their talk. It always works.—SHOPKEEPER, London, N.11.

Hands Over Her Purse

EDITH BALFOUR's article, "My Struggle Against Sleepy Sickness" (JOHN BULL, December 8), interested me greatly because I, too, have that complaint. By a coincidence, Mrs. Balfour and I are the same age and we must have been married at about the same time. Many are the bumps I get from not quite clearing furniture or doorways, and sometimes when I am shopping my mind goes blank and I cannot work out how much money to give the shopkeepers. I have to give them my purse to help themselves, but they are always very kind. For all that, I am very happy.—MRS. GLADYS JENNINGS, 175 Vicarage Road, London, E.10.

Rode On Blondin's Back

AT EIGHTY-SIX, I believe myself to be the only man alive who has crossed a tight rope on the shoulders of Charles Blondin of Niagara Falls fame. Blondin was a guest at my father's hotel in 1870 and walked a rope stretched from the roof of the hotel to the roof of the Public Market in West Hartlepool. I was five at the time and accompanied him on the trip, riding pick-a-back.—HARRY SHORT, 61 Westbrooke Avenue, West Hartlepool, Durham.

Too Few Playing Fields

DURING VISITS to Australia and New Zealand, I have heard a lot of comment on Britain's poor showing in the world of sport. In my opinion, one of the main reasons is the lack of playing fields. In Australia every pint-size town has its playing fields and tennis courts. They are usually under the care of a groundsman and prepared pitches for

"A king in every sense"



I FEEL I MUST EXPRESS my appreciation of your souvenir supplement, "Our Wonderful Royal Family" (JOHN BULL, December 8). K. J. Petts's painting (reproduced above) must appeal to all, and the article accompanying it is a perfect piece of writing—concise and straightforward language, without flamboyant or sycophantic adjectives, conveying the impression of a very great man in circumstances of great responsibility and physical handicap, backed up by his sense of duty and the support of his family. A king in every sense of the word.—J. MURRAY, 134 Cardigan Road, Leeds, 6.

PETTS'S PAINTING is a masterpiece and a true likeness of each member of the Royal Family. I notice, however, that the Queen is not wearing the Canadian maple leaf brooch which she was wearing in the photograph on the front of the supplement. As the painting was based on a photograph taken at the same time, I am wondering how this happened.—MRS. GERTRUDE MCLEOD, 11A Block Beggs Buildings, Abbeyhill, Edinburgh.

No oversight, says Petts. To his artist's eye, the general effect of this picture was enhanced by the omission of that detail.

THIS WEEK'S COVER



AS any young father knows, "the joys of parenthood" have to be shared. And that means *all* the joys—or else. Cover artist William Showell can afford to smile indulgently at his own humour. He's been

through that early morning feed business with three children—long before the National Dried Milk era. He's forty-nine now, and his children have grown up.

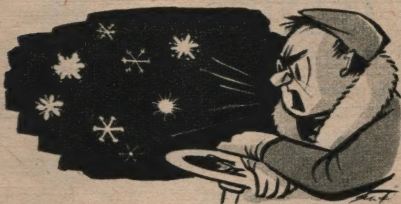
★ ★ ★

We are sorry to learn that the picture on the cover, and our comment on page 6, of our issue of November 10 have been construed as a reflection on the management of St. Mark's School, Chelsea. The drawing was intended merely to show the happy and high-spirited behaviour of children released from school, and our artist did not mean to depict anything that might cast a reflection on St. Mark's or any other school. We much regret any hurt or annoyance that may have been caused to the headmaster and his staff.

all the popular sports can be hired at very small cost. Many of them are free. The amenities are much better than those in my own home town and many other towns in Britain that I have visited.—J. W. S., Northumberland.

Keep The Roads Clear

WHEN SNOW IS FALLING, will shopkeepers and others please not shovel the snow from the front of their premises into the roadway? I am a



heavy goods driver and conditions are already difficult and dangerous enough for us, without making them more so with these extra piles of snow.—DENNIS H. B. MILLWARD, 1 Melbourne Road, Western Park, Buckley, Chester.

Help For Students

FEES FOR EVENING CLASSES in some technical colleges have been increased this winter, and are more than some people can afford. It does not seem right that anyone who is willing to sacrifice evenings for study to obtain special qualifications should be discouraged by the cost involved.—J. H., Knowle, Bristol.

Students who can show that they cannot afford the course they wish to take can usually obtain a remission of the whole or part of the fees by approaching the principal of the college or the local education authority.

Don't Shoot The Met. Men

HERE IS MY New Year resolution: to try not to jeer at the whole system of weather forecasting when the sunshine that has been almost promised gets lost in rain clouds. From my windows, I can see the Brecon Beacons and, on a clear day, the Cotswold Hills, and the weather antics played on this life-size stage show the problems of the Met. man. As I write, there is a storm cloud "no bigger than a man's hand" moving slowly in from the west. Will it follow the lie of the valleys and move away, or take to hill-climbing and beat a furious tattoo on my window? There are rules, but even more exceptions.—F. W. BATY, May Hill, Longhope, Glos.

Treatment Not Used

GREAT LOSS to farmers and the destruction of many cattle are caused by foot-and-mouth disease. Is this necessary? My father, who had a wide experience

told me that in his young days farmers treated their cattle and many completely recovered.—E. C. TIMMS, 524 Moseley Road, Birmingham.

The disease is a small sore which comes on the cloven hoof of the animal. He licks it and consequently the disease spreads to the mouth. It is the saliva from the sore mouth which spreads the disease. An effective treatment is to put the foot in Stockholm tar and a "cradle" round the animal's neck, to prevent its mouth reaching its feet.—WILLIAM INGLEFIELD, The Haven, 72 Dimsdale Crescent, Bishop's Stortford, Herts.

There are known methods of treatment, but none is very good, and, though the animals may recover, they are unlikely to be completely healthy. While the treatment is going on, the disease is likely to spread. Since 1892, British policy has been to slaughter affected animals.

Not Enough Helicopters

MALAYA'S WOUNDED are not all lucky enough to be evacuated by helicopter as shown in your interesting photograph ("Free Speech," November 10). As one of the jungle warriors, I cannot recall



that a helicopter was ever used for us—and my regiment lost thirty-four men in Malaya. We have carried our own wounded for as much as fifteen miles in some parts. I enclose a photograph of the military funeral of one of my friends in Penang. Ten hours elapsed from the time he was shot until he was operated on. If a helicopter had been available, perhaps he would still be alive.—FRED SPARKES, 108 Kings Road, Herne Bay, Kent.

Letters intended for publication should be marked "Free Speech" and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped, addressed envelope for reply.

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WINE MERCHANTS
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I have taken a full course of your Lantigen 'B', and it will be about 4 or 5 weeks since I ceased taking it, but it has now rendered my Catarrh, which was severe, quite negligible now.

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(signed)
E. C., Norfolk.



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Is your hair dowdy, lifeless?

Do people whisper behind your back?

DO PEOPLE class your hair as "dowdy"? If it's dry, lifeless, or if there are flakes of dandruff in the parting, on your collar, they *probably* do! So how about changing that—now? You can!

For these things are signs of ugly Dry Scalp—and you can end Dry Scalp! A 20-second daily massage (but don't just rub, move the whole scalp) with 'Vaseline' Brand Hair Tonic does the trick and ends Dry Scalp.

Yes, with this daily treatment, your hair will become easy to comb, naturally glossy all day and every day, easy to keep in place. Get a bottle of 'Vaseline' Hair Tonic now!



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THE DRESSING THAT ENDS DRY SCALP



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JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM KEMP

It was Isaac Singer's idea, a century ago, to put seamstresses in shop windows. The company still does it, and women still stand and stare, like these shoppers outside the Brompton Road branch in London. But some of Singer's other stunts have been abandoned

Mr. Singer's money-making machine

by JOHN KOBLER

The private history of a world-wide company, founded by one of the most flamboyant, uninhibited characters ever to become a multi-millionaire

IN A RECENT NOVEL of adventure on the Amazon, *River of the Sun*, by James Ramsey Ullman, one of the characters pays grudging tribute to that ubiquitous symbol of merchant enterprise, the Singer sewing machine salesman. A native rubber planter, who is trying to exploit a tract deep within the miasmal, snake-infested jungle, complains that few labourers care to go there. "Always they are sending them," he reflects bitterly, "and what comes? Nothing comes. No men, no ships, no machines, nothing." Then he sees Mordecai Cobb, the demon Singer salesman, who has been peddling his wares in the forbidden territory as nonchalantly as though it were just another small town in the

United States. "Only this one comes," the planter jeers, "with his name-of-a-name sewing machines."

The picture is no mere novelist's fancy. If anything, it understates reality. To many of Singer's 40,000 salesmen and collectors, Cobb's rugged itinerary would be routine. During the century since Isaac Merritt Singer invented the machine which has sustained the world's farthest-flung commercial empire, they have penetrated lands wilder than the Amazon and survived perils deadlier than any braved by Mordecai Cobb. They have canvassed practically every spot on earth that supports human life, from igloo settlements above the Arctic Circle to pygmy kraals in

Equatorial Africa. In the process they have been buffeted by hurricane, earthquake and flood; plundered by bandits, beaten up by xenophobic mobs; jailed, amid revolutions and wars, as enemy aliens.

How assiduously the salesmen have cultivated the backward areas of the world is indicated by the fact that of the approximately 1,250,000 sewing machines sold by Singer last year, no more than sixty-seven per cent were electrified. In the United States itself Singer still sells about four per cent of the hand- and foot-powered models.

There is only one radio in all Tibet, the Grand Lama's, but innumerable Tibetans own Singers. The tiny sheikdom of Kuwait on the Persian



Edward Clark, Singer's partner, was disgusted by his gay and lengthy visits abroad



Isaac Singer with his second wife, Isabella (left), and some of their children and friends at Paignton. There he built a huge house, but died before it was completed

Gulf (population: 50,000) absorbs about 1,000 Singers a year, as does primitive Ethiopia. Throughout the Pacific Islands, Singers remain a popular medium of barter. Moro traders buy them in Manila, exchange them in the Sulus and the Marianas for copra, pearls and dried fish.

Annual Singer sales in the Union of South Africa average 40,000. Business is particularly brisk around the Rand gold-mines, where zoot-minded young miners like to sew themselves crazy-quilt trousers.

The Matebele, who wear no trousers, have less practical use for sewing machines, but their chieftains sometimes keep one oiled and shined in front of their kraals as a mark of distinction. In Nigeria a Singer salesman once came upon a colony of Ubangis who insisted that "good iron makes good noise." He landed several customers by loosening screws until his machines emitted the desired racket.

Riot Over Trademark Girl

Now and then Singer unwittingly violates some native custom. When it began displaying machines in Moslem countries, outraged crowds smashed its shop windows. What offended them was the "Red S" trademark girl. Though Mohammedanized in every other respect, she wore no veil.

Household machines comprise the bulk of Singer's business. There are sixteen varieties, from a child's toy that will sew a simple dress seam. Its best-seller, a featherweight portable, can do 1,000 stitches a minute. But its catalogue also lists more than 3,000 different industrial machines. Nobody—not even the president of the company—knows exactly how many at any given moment, for improved ones are constantly being developed and others retired.

Singer gets a good many suggestions for sewing-machine attachments which sound as though they had been conceived in delirium. They have included a "squatorganomotor," a combination of harmonica and player piano, to soothe the seamstress with music as she sews; a fan to cool her; an atomizer to spray her with perfume; a fly exterminator; a shoe-shiner; and, inevitably, a perpetual-motion apparatus.

Compared to the hurly-burly of Singer's production and sales operations, the atmosphere in its forty-three year old, forty-seven storey New

York headquarters, the world's first skyscraper, is one of monastic calm. Under the weight of years and tradition, the top executives move at a stately pace. The language of Singer's staff communications also retains a faint fragrance of yesteryear, being flavoured with "esquire," and "your good self."

It is ironical that this monumentally decorous organization owes its origin to one of the most flamboyant characters who ever flashed across the American scene. For Isaac Singer's career was the acme of unconventionality.

A spectacular failure until middle age, drifting from mechanics to acting and back again, he achieved in eleven days the invention which made him a multi-millionaire, enriched six generations of investors and revolutionized industry the world over. In an era of prudery, his uninhibited private life startled two continents. He married twice, maintained three mistresses and begot, in and out of wedlock, twenty-four children. Vain and contentious, he quarrelled with practically everybody who opposed his will, frequently threatening bodily damage. His volcanic temper once reduced a creditor to tears.

At the same time, Singer had charitable impulses which moved him, even when he himself was floundering at the lowest ebb of his fortunes, to give a beggar the last cent in his pockets. He liked music and literature, especially Shakespeare, though his formal education was rudimentary. His speech and correspondence bristled with illiteracies. In a bill of sale which he made out when he was forty, he wrote: "This is to certify that I have Sould to Martain Bellows one of my resently invented sewing machines for wich I warrent the free use—"

Captivated By Actresses

He was born on October 27, 1811, in Pittstown, a village near Troy, New York, the eighth and last child of destitute German immigrants, Adam and Ruth Singer. Moving to Oswego, New York, Adam Singer remarried. Isaac resented his stepmother, and at the age of twelve decamped to Rochester, never to return. Machinery fascinated him. He apprenticed himself to a lathe turner and displayed such aptitude that he soon qualified as a journeyman. But in Rochester, Isaac attended his first play, and he

was instantly captivated, more perhaps by the ladies in the cast than the show itself.

Thereafter he seized every opportunity for work around the theatre, however lowly—ticket taker, scene shifter, prop man—turning to his lathe only as a last resort. By relentless wheedling, he eventually won bit parts. Physically, if not artistically, he was well endowed for the stage. Herculean in build, with a mane of auburn hair and a massive brow and jaw, he radiated vigour.

Fifteen-year-old Bride

While playing Palmyra, New York, Singer's roving eye noticed a girl named Catherine Maria Haley. She became the first Mrs. Singer. Isaac was nineteen, his bride fifteen. A strolling player's salary proved inadequate to support a family, which presently included two children. Reluctantly, Isaac resumed his former vocation.

In 1835 the Singers were leading a meagre existence in New York, when a Shakespearian company advertised for actors. Once more Isaac struck out cross-country, leaving Catherine to fend for herself. They never again lived under the same roof. Instead he took up with a girl he met in Baltimore, a saloon-keeper's daughter named Mary Ann Sponsler, who was unaware that he was married. Singer told her some months later, promising to sue Catherine for divorce. This, however, he did not get round to for twenty-four years, and when he did, it was not to marry Mary Ann. Meanwhile, she bore him ten children. By that time, too, Isaac had sired six more children by two other women.

In 1839, having temporarily deserted Mary Ann to tour with another road company, Isaac found himself stranded. Later he found employment with a manufacturer of printers' wooden type. Here he hit upon another labour-saving device, a type-carving machine. A bookseller, George B. Zieber, helped Singer to make models of his machine, one of which was exhibited in a Boston workshop owned by a merchant named Orson C. Phelps. But few publishers troubled to look at Singer's brainchild and none wanted to buy it.

As he paced the premises, desperately wondering where to turn next, Singer fell to studying his landlord's activities. A manufacturer of sewing machines, Phelps had worries of his own. The design was so faulty that purchasers

kept returning their machines for repairs. Although Singer had never seen a sewing machine, he quickly spotted the main defect.

"And how would you correct it?" the machinist asked loftily.

"In place of the shuttle going around in a circle," Singer retorted, "I would have it move to and fro in a straight line, and in place of the needle bar pushing a curved needle horizontally, I would have a straight needle moving up and down."

Phelps was impressed, and he challenged Singer to draw a sketch. Singer drew it overnight, whereupon Phelps proposed a three-man partnership, he to provide a workshop and staff, Zieber the money, and Singer a better sewing machine. Zieber could spare only forty dollars.

At First It Did Not Sew

"I worked at it day and night," Singer related years later, "sleeping three or four hours out of the twenty-four, and eating generally but once a day, as I knew I must make it for the forty dollars or not get it at all. The machine was completed in eleven days. About nine o'clock in the evening we got the parts together and tried it. It did not sew. The workmen, exhausted with almost unremitting work, pronounced it a failure, and left me one by one."

"Zieber held the lamp, and I continued to try the machine, but anxiety and incessant work had made me nervous, and I could not get tight stitches. Sick at heart, about midnight we started for our hotel. On the way we sat down on a pile of boards, and Zieber mentioned to me that the loose loops of thread were on the upper side of the cloth. It flashed upon me that we had forgotten to adjust the tension on the needle thread. We went back, adjusted the tension, tried the machine, sewed five stitches perfectly, and the thread snapped. But it was enough."

Bursting with optimism, the three partners prepared to manufacture and distribute the machine. Zieber managed to scrape together additional capital of 620 dollars. At first they encountered vast public indifference. Too many people had been stuck with defective makes.

Isaac Singer, drawing confidently upon his theatrical instincts, appeared at county fairs, church suppers, circuses and carnivals to give dramatic sewing demonstrations. His virile countenance now framed by whiskers, he would mend a torn dress or run up a blouse to the giggling delight of the ladies in the audience. For emotional appeal he would recite, with all stops out, Thomas Hood's dolorous ballad, "The Song of the Shirt":

*"With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! Stitch! Stitch!"*

Zieber and Singer shifted their operations to New York, setting up a workshop and sales office at 258 Broadway. Then a staggering blow befell them. A competitor announced that he was going to file a suit against them for 25,000 dollars—which was more than I. M. Singer had in total capital.

Lawyer's Shrewd Bargain

Singer walked down Broadway to No. 103, the office of a lawyer named Edward Clark. Clark listened with intense interest. Sensing great possibilities in the future of sewing machines, he agreed to represent the company in return for an equal partnership. It was one of the shrewdest bargains ever struck.

No partnership ever linked two more violently antipathetic personalities than Isaac Singer and Edward Clark. At the outset, however, the two men were too engrossed by business expansion and litigation to indulge in temperamental clashes. The competitor's suit came to court three years later, and he won. It cost Singer



Betty Adamson, wardrobe mistress at Teddington Studios, uses the modern version of Isaac Singer's invention to repair a dress worn by film star Eva Bartok in *The Crimson Pirate*



Dressmaking classes do much to boost Singer sales. This one is at the Brompton Road branch

and Clark 15,000 dollars in damages and a twenty-five dollar royalty on every machine.

With litigation ended, the manufacturers could now concentrate on the product itself. They brought out their first machine designed primarily for home sewing, the "Turtle-back," and began to cast eyes on a world market, establishing their own men in key trading centres. As early as 1861 they were selling more machines in Europe than at home. In 1867 they strode still further ahead of the field by building a factory overseas, in Glasgow. Under succeeding managements, seven others shot up.

In 1856, canny Edward Clark introduced the part exchange system. The *Singer Gazette*, one of America's first house organs, advertised a fifty-dollar allowance towards the purchase of a new machine against a used one of any make, in any condition. The response was overwhelming.

The same year Clark introduced an even more sensational novelty—hire purchase. At thirty-five shillings down and thirty-five shillings a month the purchaser felt little pain.

Reaching for ever-wider markets, Clark next instituted price cutting. The "Turtle-back" was reduced to fifty dollars. Singer, meantime, exercised his flair for showmanship. Through the *Gazette* he encouraged sewing-machine jokes and puns, the more outrageous the better. (Example: "Why is a Singer sewing machine like a kiss?" "Because it seems so good.") He ballyhooed his personal triumphs with the verve of a Barnum, published sheaves of testimonials, and persuaded celebrities like Mrs. Tom Thumb to pose at the wheel of a Singer.

Competition in the early days waxed fiercest among the salesmen. Spurred on by commissions of from twenty-five to thirty per cent, they did not shrink from sharp practices. A favourite was "bird-dogging." A salesman would bribe a small boy to shadow his competitors and report the addresses they visited. He would then tackle the same prospects, leaving machines of his own on approval. Or, if a sale had been clinched, he would swap machines on irresistibly magnanimous terms. To foil each other, salesmen took to slipping out of windows. So fiercely did the pioneer salesmen try to monopolize new territory that when a Singer man and a Wheeler and Wilson man met in a frontier saloon near

Tacoma, Washington, they reached for their guns. The Wheeler and Wilson man fell dead with two bullets in his chest. Later that day his friends lynched the Singer man.

During Isaac Singer's struggles over his first machine, so Zieber stated in his memoirs, he remarked, "I don't care a damn for the invention. The dimes are what I am after." Whether or not this expressed his true sentiments, it is a fact that once a steady stream of dimes seemed assured, his interest in the business lapsed. After 1859 he patented no further improvements. He abandoned management more and more to Clark, while he himself explored the gayer aspects of life. He leased a mansion on Fifth Avenue for himself and Mary Ann, cramming it full of pianos, heroic statuary and elaborate bric-à-brac.

Mary Ann Sued For Divorce

Then, at the age of fifty-one, Singer discovered the enchantments of Europe and spent increasingly prolonged visits there, to the disgust of his hard-working partner. The last straw for Clark came when Mary Ann, asserting her rights as a common-law wife, sued Singer for divorce and alimony. She named eight co-respondents, testified that he had repeatedly beaten her and the children, and concluded: "A more dissolute man never lived in a civilized country."

To his partner, Singer wrote around this time: "Mr. Clark, dear sir, My private affairs (though justly merited) hangs heavily upon me and my soul sicends at the prospects before me and for the well fare of all concerned try to make my load of grief as light as posabl."

Clark suggested that the partnership be dissolved and replaced by a corporation whose profits he and Singer would share equally. Singer did not demur, but he stipulated a basic condition. Although he had not the faintest desire to head the company, the thought of Clark heading it depressed him. The upshot was an agreement whereby neither man could be president as long as the other lived.

On one of his junkets to Paris, Singer stayed at a small but elegant hotel run by a widow named Boyer. She had a daughter, Isabella Eugenie, who was intelligent, beautiful and twenty-one. Singer brought Isabella Eugenie back to New York as his second wife. He purchased an estate in Yonkers, on a hilltop overlooking the Hudson River. Under Isabella's influence he mellowed considerably. Never baptized, he now joined the Episcopal Church and

attended services faithfully. He dedicated himself to good works. He dallied no more along primrose paths. During the next seven years Isabella bore him six children.

In 1867 husband and wife agreed that they preferred European society and they left America for ever. They lived first in Paris—after which capital they named their third-born son—then, with the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, moved to England. They took up temporary residence near the seaside resort of Torquay and, a mile down the beach at Paignton, Singer began construction of a Greco-Roman mansion. It was to contain acres of marble and floor-to-ceiling murals, a theatre, a circus arena and a coach house large enough to stable fifty equipages. The architect estimated the cost at £100,000. Singer called it The Wigwam.

The three years which he devoted to this pleasure dome were blissful ones for Singer. It required hundreds of workers from Torquay and Paignton, to whom he paid handsome wages, and in both communities he commanded the homage due to royalty. But he never lived to see The Wigwam completed. On July 25, 1875, at the age of sixty-four, he succumbed to heart disease. Two thousand mourners followed the funeral cortege to the Torquay cemetery. Shops were closed and flags were flown at half mast. In America, the Singer offices and plants were also closed for the day. Edward Clark joined the directors in "sincerely deploring the loss of this distinguished inventor."

Family Skeletons Rattled

Isaac Singer's will, disposing of an estate valued at between thirteen and fifteen million dollars, was one of the most savagely contested in the history of the probate courts. But it was never broken.

Five years before his death, Singer had divided his fortune into sixty-four equal parts. The only woman in Singer's life to benefit under the will was Isabella. She and her six children received thirty-eight of the parts. Both Catherine and Mary Ann attacked the will, loudly rattling every skeleton in the family cupboard. The heirs eventually bought off Catherine for \$150,000, but Mary Ann refused to consider a settlement and lost altogether. All but three of the children got one or two parts each.

NEXT WEEK: How the "Red S" trademark was pushed to every corner of the globe

HORNBLOWER THE GAMBLER

WHILE, through October and November, JOHN BULL readers were thrilling to the adventures of Lieutenant Horatio Hornblower, C. S. Forester, Hornblower's creator, was taking stock of his hero's career.

Sitting in his study in Berkeley, California, he realized the story was not complete—Hornblower's fate when he returned to a peacetime England was not revealed.

Working with his usual concentration—one and a half hours a day—he set out to tell the story of Hornblower in peacetime.

The result is a brilliant new two-part

story, *Hornblower the Gambler*, starting in JOHN BULL next week.

It shows a new Hornblower—a Hornblower living in squalid lodgings in Portsmouth, whose wits are exercised, not in defeating Britain's powerful enemies, but on getting his next meal.

It is a moving and exciting story, one of the best in the epic chronicle of fiction's famous hero.

To make sure of reading *Hornblower the Gambler* in next week's JOHN BULL, place an order with your newsagent now.

My seventeen months as Stalin's prisoner

by ROBERT VOGELER

NEXT week JOHN BULL will also begin publication of the authentic, first-hand story of Robert A. Vogeler, the American business man who was put on trial by Hungarian Communists and sentenced to imprisonment for "subversive activities."

He tells frankly why, after his arrest, he behaved as he did; how he tried to commit suicide; what methods were used to force him to make a spurious confession; how he spent his seventeen months in prison; and what lay behind his release earlier this year.



Released after a year and a half, Vogeler is reunited with his wife



The white men could not understand their tongue. Mekeo took his chance quickly. He had little enough time to speak before he was dragged off

The castaway

by **HUGH B. CAVE**
ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

The girl had come to share his exile on the lonely island. She did not know he was no longer alone—that she was the only woman among four men

COWARD, THEY HAD CALLED HIM. He, Mekeo, was a coward, banished forever from his village. With a shudder he looked about him. His prison isle had no name. It was called simply "the place of the marsalai." From where he stood, it resembled a great lizard with upraised horny head—a likely abode indeed for evil spirits.

He turned to look southwards towards the New Guinea mainland, eight miles distant. The war canoe which had brought him was but a dim speck in the dusk, creeping homewards. It vanished as he watched. The sea was empty.

Mekeo's heart was empty, too. All he owned had been tossed ashore at his feet; his knife, hunting spear and cassowary head-dress, even the dilly bag of silver coins which he had meant to give to the father of Walesa on his marriage day. Few young men of his village could boast of such wealth, he reflected ruefully. He alone had dared

disobey the sorcerers and work for the white man.

But only his weapons were worth keeping now, and even they might fail him.

He gathered up his things. The marsalai lived among the crags at the north end of the island, he reasoned; it was well known that they preferred high, bleak places. He would spend the night on the beach, then.

Seeking a spot well above the tide mark, he drew a circle in the smooth sand with his spear. In it he sat himself down, his weapons close at hand.

Presently, like a black mist from the cliffs above, darkness settled over him and his vigil began in earnest.

That was a dismal night, and Mekeo's thoughts matched it. Sadly he reviewed the incident which had led to his banishment. It had begun when the stranger from the mountains had wandered into the hands of Mekeo's people with golden nuggets

dangling from his armbands of cuscus fur. No one in Mekeo's village, not even the headman, had seen gold before.

"It is valuable," Mekeo had said importantly. "The white men prize it."

"Why?"

"Why? Who knows? Nevertheless, they seek it everywhere."

"And will they pay for it with trade goods?" asked the headman.

"Assuredly."

"Then," decided the headman, "we shall raid the mountain village of this man and obtain some. You, Mekeo, shall lead the raid."

"No! I lead no raid! It would bring disaster!"

"Disaster? What talk is that? Are you afraid?"

"Listen to me," Mekeo begged. But, of course, they would not listen. He had said too much already. If he refused to lead a raid, he was a

Continued on page 22

Terry-Thomas, comedian it's fun to hate

by W. G. GREATOREX

He's the perfectionist in idiocy, the humorist who uses the scientific approach. With the sophisticated come-back to turn away rudeness, he wins over those who detest him at first sight



ONE WINTER'S NIGHT early in 1939, a struggling but impeccably dressed young comedian turned up in the floor show of what at that time was London's fanciest night club. The clientele took one look at his foppish, gap-toothed grin, the red carnation in his button-hole and the eight-inch cigarette-holder he sported so earnestly, and broke into a frenzy of boos, whistles, catcalls and table-thumping.

The comedian waited for the noise to subside and then tried to begin his act. But the pandemonium started afresh. He held his ground, however, even when they started throwing flowers and rolled-up paper balls. A few minutes later, joined by his wife, who had seen the whole affair, he hailed a taxi in Leicester Square and went home.

Ever since then, Terry-Thomas (born Terry Thomas Hoar-Stevens) has been busily winning over the people who detest him at first sight. The night after his scalding reception he changed at home, as usual, into the tails and white waistcoat he wore for his cabaret appearances. To his wife, who asked where he thought he was going, he replied calmly that he had a contract with the club and intended to carry it out.

At one thirty the following morning the telephone rang in their Kensington flat. "I thought it was the St. John Ambulance Brigade," says Ida Terry-Thomas. "In fact, it was Terry—still in one piece. He just held the mouthpiece so that I could hear the applause."

Today, Terry-Thomas ("for heaven's sake don't call me Mister, please!") is popularly rated among Britain's top three or four comedians, and can take his pick from a deskful of offers from film companies, theatre impresarios, the B.B.C. and the West End cabaret promoters. He has a tremendous fan-following, yet continues to excite more instinctive animosity than any other performer.

It's Hard To Ignore Him

"Usually," observed one of his show business friends the other day, "people ignore comedians they don't like. With Terry it's different. Maybe they think his air of opulence is out of place in austerity Britain. Maybe it's the way he projects himself as an Edwardian dandy. But whatever it is, those who dislike him do so positively and intensely."

Once, he had no sooner taken the floor in a postwar cabaret than a respected member of the aristocracy, sitting at an inner table, shouted "Nuts!" Terry-Thomas sniffed at his carnation, ignored the taunt, completed his routine and then, after taking his bow, waved his cigarette-holder towards the titled barracker and called: "Waiter! Did you bring this gentleman his nuts?"

It was not the first sophisticated come-back he has used to turn away rudeness. He is used to defending his sartorial nonconformity with witticisms, not reason. "It means," said one of his friends recently, "that none of us is ever quite sure whether to take it seriously, or as a mere paying affectation. He keeps us guessing." Even as a lowly paid film extra before the war, Terry-Thomas used to arrive at the studios in morning dress and embroidered shirt.

His favourite get-up is now grey, from bowler hat to suede shoes. It includes a grey waistcoat of striking design, one of a collection of more than 200. An angular six-footer, he wears clothes with the air of the connoisseur and takes no notice of the well-intentioned advisers who are forever warning him about the effect his tailoring has on his public relations. His voice, his manner, his sustained projection of a dandified, likeable, empty-headed gentleman of leisure, have all in

Terry-Thomas with Diana Dors, one of the stars of *How Do You View?* His inanities often cause so much laughter that rehearsals stop



Early morning good deed. Terry-Thomas shares his bath water with the window-box geraniums



Late night triumph. His act gets the diners laughing in a Mayfair hotel. Even his friends never know whether to take him seriously

turn been suggested as examples of what he ought to change in his own interest.

This conflict, however, is not new. Last October, in defiance of all the pundits, Terry-Thomas refused to change his style and approach for his television appearances following the opening of Holme Moss, the new station for the North of England. He took no notice of those who said that the new audience would not accept him. "After all," he says reflectively, "I can learn a lot from the viewers who can't stand me, but not much from those who can."

More sensitive to public than professional reaction to his work, Terry watches his fan mail with thorough-going humility. Not long ago, during a discussion with several B.B.C. men, he claimed that, from his letters, he knew within three days just how viewers regarded any of his programmes. Knowing the extensive research that goes into the B.B.C.'s official way of finding box office appeal, Ronnie Waldman, head of TV light entertainment, took up the challenge. "All right," he said, "tell me next Monday the appreciation figure for *How Do You View?*"

On the Monday morning Terry-Thomas phoned Waldman to say that seventy per cent of viewers liked it. Later, the B.B.C.'s audience research department published a figure of seventy-one per cent. "Dr. Gallup," says Terry tersely, "has nothing on my postman."

TV Lesson From A Plumber

This regard for public opinion often leads Terry-Thomas into discussions in pubs, trains, streets and studios. It was a plumber, sharing his compartment from Reading to London, who gave him what he calls "my first clue about TV." Some time before, the comedian had flopped in his Alexandra Palace debut—in *Saturday Night Variety*. He had followed this up with a few irregular appearances, in one of which he did his celebrated disc-jockey sketch—an impersonation of a frantic B.B.C. man who loses the records he intended to put on and, in desperation, imitates singers from Al Jolson to the Inkspots.

The plumber recalled that he had seen his travelling companion doing these savage impressions both on the stage (in *Piccadilly Hayride*) and on the television screen. "I must say," he commented, "that I enjoyed it better

at home. I could see what it was all about. You see, I had a back seat at the theatre." From that moment, Terry-Thomas began to understand the medium he has since studied so assiduously.

Night after night, for several weeks, he watched the screen and the reactions of people looking-in, and learned the "very close close-up" technique which enables him to play successfully to an audience of three in a front room—by means of facial contortions, winks, eyebrow raising and other tricks of intimate expression.

This sort of concentration involves long spells in which Terry-Thomas wanders round vacantly pulling faces and mumbling unheard words. It has lately been applied to the, for him, new field of pantomime humour, in preparation for his rôle as the King in this year's Palladium production of *Humpty Dumpty*.

Memory Is His Secret

He was in America when Val Parnell offered him the part by cable. "I was against going into panto—for no reason I can think of," he recalls. Instead of sending a bleak "No," however, he wired back: WILL PLAY QUEEN. KING WOULD COST YOU £100 WEEK MORE. To his astonishment, the impresario accepted the second part of the good-humouredly facetious offer. "I had never believed the stories about the fantastic sums paid to panto comedians," says Terry. "Now I'm wondering how wrong I've been." In pantomime, as in television, he is a phenomenal perfectionist, for whom time no longer matters once he is at work. He has a unique capacity for memorizing dialogue almost at first glance—a talent which some see as the secret of his command of the television cameras, enabling him to concentrate on visual antics during rehearsals.

Recently, a film shot showing him getting out of a taxi and walking into Broadcasting House was needed. Simple as it was, Terry insisted on practising the brief movement four times. As a precaution, the producer decided to have three shots. On each occasion, Terry jumped out of the cab with a lordly air, tipped the driver and swung through the B.B.C.'s main entrance. By the time he had finished, he had handed out more than £2 in tips, a loss he has since been trying to live down among the studio personnel.

His inanities make him a popular artist among

the electricians, cameramen, secretaries, make-up staff and call-boys. Often during rehearsals he has them laughing so much that work is stopped. He mimics B.B.C. officials, pulls faces, and once put on ten minutes of spontaneous idiocy that had Studio I in an uproar.

The greatest backstage attraction, however, is the parody-interview with Leslie Mitchell in which Terry becomes a post office sorter, a cinema commissioner or a J. Arthur Rank "gong-basher." "It's absolutely essential that both men keep their faces straight," explains Bill Ward, producer of *How Do You View?* "Mitchell always does it wonderfully." Terry, however, goaded by the studio boys, often bursts out laughing in rehearsal. Once he laughed during an actual broadcast—a disaster that caused everyone concerned to be given a lecture on the importance of being earnest.

Nevertheless, the leg-pulling has its advantages. During one sketch in which Terry-Thomas was an Elizabethan sea captain, things were not going too convincingly. The visual gag which was not coming off properly involved Terry throwing a cannon-ball to his gunners. He tried again. As he hurled the "prop" ball across the studio, an electrician called out, "Foul throw." Terry saw it as a show-saver. He sought out the shy wag, embraced him extravagantly and said: "My boy, you've got it!" It went into the script.

Learning From Every Show

Terry-Thomas has a scientific approach to humour. The morning after every *How Do You View?* he held a four-hour inquest and planning session at his mews cottage in Kensington. The lessons of the night before and new ideas for the future were thrashed out with Bill Ward and the two scriptwriters, Sid Colin and Talbot Rothwell. Even their best-laid plans sometimes went wrong, though.

In one sketch, for instance, they installed a fruit machine. It worked perfectly at each rehearsal. The studio staff, who could not leave it alone, used it continuously without any trouble. But when Terry came to operate it during the broadcast the machine jammed.

"He sized it up in a flash," Ward relates. "He banged it, kicked it, shook it and jumped at it. It was the finest piece of visual ad-libbing I've seen in my life." THE END



Haller, with a menacing smile, stepped off the boat. Momentarily cursing himself for exposing Ruth to danger, Andrew drew her towards him

TENDER TO MOONLIGHT

by ELIOT REED

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

Whatever it was the boat contained, the two Germans wanted it badly; Kusitch's murder showed that. Andrew and Ruth were close to the truth—dangerously close

FOR THREE HECTIC YEARS, young Dr. Andrew Maclaren had been with the International Red Cross in Europe. His plans were for a few weeks' rest, then a quiet hospital job. But that was before he had met Ruth Meriden, the lovely red-head on the homeward plane.

In Brussels, where the plane had been delayed by fog, Ruth Meriden had seemed aloof—but that, as Andrew discovered later, was just an artist's offhandedness. She was a sculptress.

Meantime, a lot had happened. It began with little Mr. Kusitch, the Yugoslav with whom Andrew shared a hotel suite that night in Brussels. His job was to trace Nazi war loot for his government, but in Brussels he'd been on the

trail of something big—something his government knew nothing about.

Kretchmann and Haller, two ex-Nazis, were on the same trail. And when Kusitch was found, murdered, they had disappeared—for England.

Inspector Jordaens, the Belgian police official investigating Kusitch's murder, warned Andrew not to meddle in the case. But Andrew was too deeply interested—for Ruth Meriden, the sculptress, was involved. Together with an ex-Intelligence friend, Charlie Botten, Andrew discovered that Kusitch had been searching for a small boat, last heard of in Yugoslavia in August, 1939, where a crazy millionaire had bought it as a tender for his yacht *Moonlight*. The millionaire was John Quayle Meriden—Ruth's uncle.

Andrew went down to Meriden's forlorn old

country house and found Ruth living there alone. Her uncle was dead; the *Moonlight* sunk in the war. And the tender to *Moonlight*? Ruth didn't know, but in the hope they would give a clue, she lent Andrew her uncle's diaries.

Next day, Andrew had important news for Ruth when he met her in London: the diaries showed the tender was moored close to a mill on some of her uncle's property. Ruth promised to try and locate the mill through her solicitors.

Later that day, Andrew began to get worried. For some time he had felt he was being watched—perhaps by Kretchmann and Haller. He might even have led them to Ruth! Making a sudden decision, he rushed down to the country house. Ruth was not there; nor was she at her Chelsea flat.

Nervous, aware that something had gone

wrong, he went back home and tried to give up worrying. He had almost persuaded himself that everything was all right when the doorbell rang.

It was Ruth—scratched, muddy and scared. "Ruth!" cried Andrew as he let her in. "Ruth, what's happened to you?"

PART 4

Ruth's Story

ANDREW had no idea what to expect, but her reaction was a surprise. Even as he stood aside for her to come in, she burst out exasperatedly: "Where have you been? I came here looking for you before. I phoned. I phoned and phoned! Where have you been?"

"Looking for you. You told me you were going home. I had to see you, so I went out there."

"To Cheriton Shawe?"

"Yes, but what on earth's happened to you?"

She limped past him into the room. There was a long scratch on her face and mud on her coat. "I fell down," she said wearily. "And I think I'd like a brandy—"

Something in her tone stilled the questions crowding to his lips. He went to her quickly.

"Here, you'd better sit down. I'll get you something."

She sank into a chair exhaustedly. "I ought to have gone back to Palgrave Street, to my flat," she said. "But like a fool I didn't. You see, I got frightened."

"Oh." He handed her a glass. "Don't sip it. Drink it right down."

She did, then gasped a little. He took the glass away and refilled it.

"What scratched your face?" he asked.

"A bramble."

"What about your leg?"

"I've bruised my knee. It's a bit stiff, that's all."

He gave her the refilled glass. "Do you feel like telling me what happened?"

She nodded and then, to his relief, she smiled. "It was that wretched boat," she said. "I tried to find it for you."

"You did what?"

And then she told him.

Throughout the morning her thoughts had kept going to the boat. For that reason, perhaps, she had failed to take any interest in the American dealer, who wanted to talk business, and, in the end, had asked him to postpone his visit to Cheriton Shawe until his return from Paris a fortnight hence, when she would have more work to show him.

"After lunch," she went on, "I went to see the lawyer. He didn't know anything about the boat, but he remembered the mill." She paused. "It's a windmill."

"A windmill!" With his knowledge of John Quayle Meriden's peculiarities, the information should not have been startling. He was surprised because he had visualized something else. A windmill did not seem to go with streams and landing-stages. It was rather a thing of bleak uplands and windswept plains. "Is it the mill we're looking for?" he asked.

"I don't know. It seems likely, from the position. I was too frightened to make certain."

"What do you mean?"

IT seemed that years ago Uncle John had gone duck-shooting at Groper's Wade on the Thames Estuary and had returned to town in a state of high excitement about this windmill. He had recently read a magazine article on the production of electricity by wind-power, and had been inspired by the idea. He would buy the ruined mill, restore it, equip it with a generating plant, and demonstrate that the theories of the magazine writer were sound. Then he would buy up windmills all over the country and furnish enough cheap electricity to supply the nation's needs. The Meriden System would be the salvation of industry, and John Quayle

would be honoured wherever a spark was required to turn a wheel or light the darkness.

He bought the mill.

The owner threw in the mill cottage, landing-stage, all appurtenances, and riparian rights, if any. The agreement was signed and the price paid. Within a week, Meriden had forgotten about it, and nobody had been inclined to remind him.

"That's what one might have expected," Ruth Meriden commented. And then, after a pause: "Do you know where Groper's Wade is?"

"Not exactly," Andrew confessed.

"You take the train to Britsea and then you walk across the marsh. I've just done that."

"You what?"

"I have just come back from there," she said



They stopped abruptly. Below, rocking gently with the tide, lay the boat

calmly. "I telephoned you here from the lawyer's office. I telephoned three times from different places. Then I decided to go down and check on the mill. I thought you'd like to know definitely if the yawl was there."

"Good God!" he exclaimed. "You shouldn't have done that alone! Didn't you realize there was danger? After all I told you about my being shadowed?"

"I didn't think there'd be any danger to me."

"Look! I went out to Cheriton Shawe today because I wanted to bring you back to town. I was afraid for you, alone in that crazy house. I thought the gang who killed Kusitch might find the link and go after you. And you walk right into their hands! You're lucky to have got away from them. They might have killed you. Now that they've found the yawl, there's nothing more we can do. We'd better call up Scotland Yard at once and let the police clear things up."

"Will you stop being melodramatic and listen to me? I didn't walk into anybody's hands. And nobody has found the boat. At least, not so far as I know. When I got down to Britsea, it was later than I expected," she said. "Have you any idea what Britsea's like?"

"Well, what is it like?"

"Hell," she said simply.

Britsea, it appeared, was a railway station

and a bungalow colony with a few nissen huts added for architectural variety. The lawyer had told her that it was a short walk to the mill, but when she came in sight of it, it seemed to be miles away—a squat stump on the edge of nowhere with dark clouds piling up behind it and the day looking as if it were going to do an early fade-out. It was cold, too. A wind blew in from the sea and across the marsh unhindered. She went on a little farther. Then she became afraid that she could not reach the mill and get back to the station before nightfall, and the idea of darkness on the marsh was not pleasant.

"Even in the daylight it's bad enough," she said. "The fact is, I wouldn't have gone on in any circumstances. I was scared of the loneliness. I can't stand it when I find myself in the middle of nothing. Then I got the idea I was being followed, and—well, I suppose I fell into a panic."

Andrew cut in with a question: "What gave you the idea? Did you see anyone?"

"Yes. I passed a garbage dump and saw a man poking about in it."

"How was he dressed?" Andrew asked tensely. "A cloth cap and a long, grey coat that flapped round his legs as he walked?"

"No. Nothing like it. He didn't have a hat or coat; just slacks and a rough sort of seaman's sweater."

Andrew let out a sigh of relief. "Just an old tramp, I suppose."

"That's what I thought," she agreed. "If you hadn't put this shadowing business into my head, I wouldn't have taken any notice. I didn't at first, but I happened to look back, and he'd come over the edge of the hollow and seemed to be watching me. That was the first thing that started me off. When I looked back a little later, he had disappeared. I told myself that it was all right, but it wasn't. I believed he might be following me to snatch my bag. Then I thought he might have something to do with the Kusitch business, and that was when I really panicked."

RUTH shivered at the memory. All over the desolation, apparently, were pools with screens of reeds and rushes, tall enough to hide a man bent double, and the track between the windmill and the station found a winding way among them. She had begun to walk back, and then, as the panic mounted in her, and the nissen huts and the station seemed farther off than ever, she had begun to run. Then, her foot had caught in a trailing bramble. She crashed down, barking her knee on a stone and tearing her cheek on another bramble. As she fell, a wild bird rose from the screen of reeds and went off with a whirr of dark wings.

"I was terrified," she said. "I lay there on my face, crying, till I found I was partly in a pool of water. Then I got up and went on. I ran. I imagined a man was coming after me. I imagined a shadow behind every clump of reeds. It was all imagination. I should have gone on. I had time to get to the windmill and back. I might have found out about the boat."

"I'm glad you didn't," Andrew told her. "We'll go together in the morning. I'll hire a car and drive you."

"We'll have to leave it till the afternoon. I must go to the Gallery in the morning. Hinkleigh is furious over the way I behaved today."

Something in her intonation took away all his animosity towards Hinkleigh. Besides, there was the way she had behaved today.

"All right," he said. "We'll leave it till the afternoon. Now we'll go and get something to eat."

"Like this?"

"You can tidy up here. Anyway, we'll go somewhere quiet."

They went to the restaurant where he had dined with Charlie Botten two nights ago. It was an admirable place for the occasion. It

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Martin Woodliffe, the Vesturer of Canterbury Cathedral. Behind him is the Dark Entry, through which he passes daily to the Treasury



Every morning, Woodliffe superintends the Buffs ceremony. A member of his staff deputizes when no sailors are present to sound the ship's bell

Friendly eye on the Canterbury pilgrims

by the Rev. W. E. PURCELL

For nearly fourteen centuries, Canterbury Cathedral has had its Vesturers—men who, like Martin Woodliffe, love their stately task of “running” the First Church of All England

IN ANY OTHER ANGLICAN place of worship but Canterbury Cathedral, the “First Church of All England,” Vesturer Martin Woodliffe would be known and addressed as plain “Verger.” In any other cathedral but Canterbury, too, with its thirteen and a half centuries of tradition, there would be little chance of finding a sailor or, failing that, an obvious ex-sailor, at a quarter to eleven in the morning. But Vesturer Woodliffe frequently succeeds in finding one.

A dignified, benign figure in his trailing black cassock, the Vesturer moves quietly among the modern Canterbury Pilgrims, looking without appearing to look. Failing the presence of a sailor in uniform, he next seeks for a civilian who looks as though he is an ex-sailor. (“It’s something in the eye and something in the stance that gives away a sailor.”) If he is successful, he asks him to step aside for a short chat.

From the silence of the ancient Close a moment later comes the unmistakable rhythmic clump-clump of a soldier on the march. All eyes turn towards the massive door, as through it, with arms swinging, eyes looking straight ahead, marches a lone soldier of the Royal East Kents—The Buffs.

The crowd is quite silent now. At the entrance to the flag-hung Warriors’ Chapel, the Regimental Shrine of The Buffs, the soldier halts, steps forward and turns a single page of the Book of Remembrance containing the names of the regiment’s fallen. At the same time the bell of H.M.S. *Canterbury*, which stands alongside, is struck by the chosen sailor under Vesturer Woodliffe’s guidance. As the sound dies away, the silent soldier turns about and marches out as smartly as he came.

Long Working Day

Quietly, the crowd disperses to gaze at the tomb of the Black Prince and the Chantry that bears his name, or at the spot where St. Thomas à Becket, the “holy blissful martyr,” was murdered on December 29, 1170—an event which for four centuries brought pilgrims to Canterbury from all over Europe. Vesturer Woodliffe moves on to the next task in his long day which, in August, when the motor coaches disgorge as many as 7,000 tourists a day, may last fourteen hours, with only hurried breaks for meals.

What a regimental sergeant-major is to a well-run military establishment, Vesturer Woodliffe is to Canterbury Cathedral. He has his own staff to help him in the day-to-day tasks of seeing that the cathedral is properly heated, taking inventories, cleaning the treasured thirty-six pieces of altar plate, and counting the collections behind the locked doors of the room known in other churches as the vestry, but which, because this is Canterbury, is known as the Treasury.

It is to this room that Woodliffe reports every morning shortly after seven. Unhurriedly (haste

is unseemly in a cathedral), he walks from his flat next door to the Deanery and through the picturesquely named Dark Entry. He takes a key from his belt and unlocks a wrought iron gate, passes through a small wooden door and enters the Treasury to consult his book about the events of the coming day. Whatever the occasion, it is Woodliffe’s duty to see that everything goes without a hitch. Once the organist high up in his loft has started to play, it is too late to rectify mistakes.

Sir Adrian’s Dilemma

Woodliffe admits that on a few occasions he has come very near to disaster. Not long ago Sir Adrian Boult brought the London Philharmonic to play in the cathedral. Someone (Woodliffe will not give names) had forgotten to put aside a room where Sir Adrian could change his clothes before he went in to conduct. With only a few minutes to spare, Woodliffe whisked him away, at what passes in a cathedral for breakneck speed, across to his own flat and back again, with only seconds to spare.

As for the case of the twenty-two mayors and the twenty-two macebearers, Woodliffe refuses to take any blame. Well in advance he had arranged the tickets and the necessary chairs. Dead on time the dignified mayors and their macebearers filed in to their places. Woodliffe, as usual, stood inconspicuously at the back. The mayors sat down, and so did nineteen of the macebearers. The other three stood around awkwardly without a seat. Woodliffe looked on baffled. He counted the mayors and counted the chairs. Everything was in order. He counted the macebearers and their chairs, too. Everything according to plan—except that three of them had spread over two chairs each.

Much of his long day is taken up in wandering around the great cathedral seeing that visitors are made welcome, and answering their questions. The authorities at Canterbury, knowing that to many visitors a cathedral can remain a place of mystery unless significant historical details are explained, have arranged special pilgrimages under the guidance of volunteer clergy and local friends of the cathedral to points of interest. Woodliffe usually finds time during the summer afternoons to lead one or two parties.

He finds that Australians and New Zealanders are the most enthusiastic and knowledgeable. He has met many Australians who have told him that they have come to Canterbury straight from the boat, even before arranging hotel accommodation in London. There has also been an increase in the number of Continental cycling clubs since the war. As thousands of pilgrims have done in centuries past on foot, they make Canterbury their first stop on the way to London and the Midlands.

Quietly, as he “polices” the cathedral, Vesturer Woodliffe keeps an eye open for initial

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Conway stepped back. His head was singing and his jaw felt broken. The mob closed in and a voice said: "Let's take this quietly, shall we?"

THE TROUBLE WITH CONWAY

by *LIONEL DAVIDSON*

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

"It's no good going to the police," the voice on the phone had said.

"This isn't a joke." Conway knew that. He was under no illusions now

WHEN CONWAY CAME OUT OF the Army in 1945, he had no very clear idea of what he wanted to do. He knew quite well what he didn't want to do. He didn't want to go back to the small provincial town, or the family cinema. It was a drab little town; it was a drab cinema. The Army had given him a welcome release from them both for five years.

He had to go back. His father, a widower, had, with prescience, made over the cinema to him in good time to avoid death duties. When he died suddenly, Conway, prompted by Grosling, the family solicitor, applied for a special release and got it. And one Friday

morning he found himself, with reluctance, on a train going home.

Grosling had asked him to give him notice of his return so that he could have the house ready for him. Conway didn't do that. He didn't want to stay in the town any longer than was necessary. His idea then was to sell the house and the cinema, and go to London.

After lunch at the hotel, he went to have a look at the cinema to prime himself for the argument he knew would soon arise. Grosling had handled the family's business for a long time; he wouldn't be very thrilled at the sell-out-and-hop-it policy.

The cinema had never been very much of a

place, but he was shocked by the change in it. It looked run down, worn out, finished with. A shabby little commissionaire slopped about outside. Conway bought a ticket and went in. Inside he was even more appalled. Springs were sticking out of some of the seats, the exit curtains were torn, carpets threadbare. The little mockery of an audience, huddled at the front of the house, was apathetic, silent to the wisecracks on the screen.

Conway stuck it for half an hour, watched a few more people come in and wander to the front of the house, and then he left. He went straight to Grosling's office. The solicitor

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I LOVED A WICKED CITY (3) by MARY BALL

We "foreign devils" go villaging

Ever since her arrival in 1925 in Tatung, "wickedest city in China," Mary Ball had been up against it. The hospital in which the young British missionary worked was badly damaged during a bitter civil war. Then a wave of anti-British feeling swept through China, forcing her to quit the city. Now she returned—to find new problems facing her ...



Sister Mary Ball

ON MY RETURN TO TATUNG, I was warned that Dr. Francis Li, who had been left in charge of the hospital during the evacuation, had fallen into evil ways and succumbed to the temptations of the city. At first I was inclined to pooh-pooh this warning. After all, Francis was a Christian and, although they lived in a village near Peking—far from his post in Tatung—he had a wife and children. Besides, I had known him now for several years and despite his occasional brusqueness, I had always thought of him as a good and kindly man.

But, after Dr. Bryan Brown had left, Francis was the only qualified doctor in Tatung, and the Mosse Memorial was the only existing hospital in this city of 200,000. Later, I heard how the head military men of the city had come to Dr. Li for treatment of their old wounds, of their ills and of the ills of their families. This military clique lived life to its corrupt limit. They drank, gambled and consorted with the women of the streets. But, they controlled the city; and I am convinced that it was Francis's desire to make them understand the work of the hospital and to co-operate with it which, perversely, dragged him farther and farther from his work and deeper and deeper into the city's wickedness.

The military governor of the city was a General Chao. He had six wives. The first he had pensioned off; the second was for the production of children—she bore him nine girls and a boy; the third was for beauty; the fourth and fifth were to look after the children of the second; and the sixth was—an afterthought. It was through attending Chao's family that Francis first made contact with the military clique. The general was a man of many vices, but gambling at Mah Jongg was the favourite of these. He would play day and night with his cronies; and, eventually, he said to Francis: "Oh, come and take a hand." The doctor did. This was the beginning of his downfall. Starting

in a small way, with stakes he could afford, he soon lost all restraint.

Meanwhile, Miss Garnett, back on duty as matron, had felt it her duty to write to the bishop about Dr. Li. The bishop decided—without consulting Francis—to send his wife and children up from their village near Peking to live with him on the hospital compound, on the theory that a return to family life would pull the doctor together. At the time, worried as we were about Dr. Li, none of us knew the full facts. We were aware that he had taken to remaining out all night, returning to the hospital at half-past eight in the morning, just in time for breakfast and his ward rounds. He made no excuse or comment. If there were operations scheduled, he took them on; otherwise, he went to bed and slept all morning. He began to look white and drawn and was so short-tempered with out-patients that I was ashamed, on behalf of the hospital, of his behaviour.

An Icy Reception

One morning at six o'clock, Mrs. Li arrived at the hospital with her five small children. She had been travelling for four days and was obviously exhausted—a small, prematurely old woman who, at thirty-eight, looked fifty. She and the children straggled up the hospital stairs, led by a boy night nurse to the doctor's room on the second floor. Francis came to the door—he had arrived home earlier than usual—looked out at her and the children and said icily: "I told you not to come." He slammed the door.

I was sleeping at the women's end of the same floor and the sound awakened me. The children, too, had begun to cry and their wailing echoed through the hospital. A knock came on my door and I opened it. Mrs. Li, downcast, was standing there. "Oh, Miss Ball," she said, her lips quivering, "what are we going to do?"

"Why, Mrs. Li!" I said, "I'm so pleased to see you. Do come up to the next floor." There

was a small flat up there consisting of dining-room, sitting-room and spare bedroom.

I went down to the kitchen and asked the cook to send breakfast up for Mrs. Li and the children. After a helping of millet gruel, the youngsters lay down on the floor and fell at once into a deep sleep. Then Mrs. Li went to see her husband again. I could not understand his behaviour: he had always been so thoughtful and gentle. At about eleven that morning, he sent some coolies up to collect the children and their luggage and wrote a note to me saying that his wife would be moving to the west house of the compound. But Mrs. Li's cheeks were stained with the dried tracks of tears. Here she was, in a foreign house, far too large for her accustomed

ILLUSTRATION BY OLIPHANT



I held up two fingers beside the woman's eyes, but she could see nothing. "Honourable old lady," I sighed, "you are blind." Her reaction was extraordinary

needs, with no friends. She was despised by her husband—and she had lost much face.

It was not for many years that I was able to see Francis's viewpoint. He had become an educated man since his marriage and he was looked up to by the influential citizens of Tatung. He had been put in a place of trust by the bishop as the hospital's first Chinese superintendent. And now his drab, countrified wife, who had never tried to improve herself so that she could entertain his new friends on equal terms, made him feel that she was inadequate for his new position in life. He had, indeed, come to look on her almost as an inferior servant.

Even with his family esconced in the west house, Francis continued to keep his own room

at the hospital. That situation remained as it was for some time.

In 1933, Miss Garnett returned to England, leaving me as matron in her place. The hospital was slowly getting back on its feet.

When we had returned to the hospital, after our evacuation from Tatung in 1928, we found that the people in the rural districts around Tatung had forgotten us. Few came in from the countryside to be treated. I volunteered to go villaging, with a mission team, to spread the word of our return. Each Tuesday we set out in carts, taking lunch with us, and returned before sunset. The carts were drawn by mules, with bells around their necks, and when the children, playing in the streets of the villages, heard the

jingling of the bells, they invariably shouted: "Come, look! The foreign devils have come!"

Our boy nurse told the children: "If you have any people at home sick, or who need medicine, the doctor is here now. You can come and have free treatment." I was the "doctor." Once, a small child replied: "My granny can't see. Will you come and look at her eyes?"

"Can't your granny come here to the doctor?"

"Oh, yes! I will go and bring her. You'll be sure to wait, won't you?" Presently, he returned along the village street, a small child, with a bent old woman who hobbled along with him, one hand clutching a stick, the other leaning heavily on her grandson's shoulder.

I looked at her eyes, which were covered with



Nick, the hospital's Russian engineer. His long and forlorn search for a wife became a staff joke. Three times his wedding plans fell through; the fourth time he was lucky



Francis Li. When the Japanese persecuted Mary Ball, this Chinese doctor proved a true friend

a white film. I turned her eyelids back and saw the granular growth characteristic of trachoma. Still, it was possible that she had some slight vision out of the sides of her eyes, in which case an operation might help her to see a little better. "Can you see the sun?" I asked her.

She looked upward, feeling for the warmth with her blind eyes. "No, I can't see the sun."

Then I held up two fingers at the side of one of her eyes and asked if she could see them.

"No. I can't see anything."

I sighed. I gave her a caressing pat on the back. "Honourable old lady," I said, hoping not to make her too sad, "I can do nothing for your eyes. You are blind." Her reaction was extraordinary. Her face lit up and she smiled gleefully. She felt for my hand. "What a wonderful doctor you are! You are quite right. Of course, I cannot see!" And the people of the village, who had gathered around us, nodded their heads to each other and to me and said in chorus: "Oh, you're quite right. She hasn't been able to see for years!"

Later, I was joined in my villaging by Agnes Elisson, a Swedish missionary. A fair-haired girl with large, solemn blue eyes, she was very unsure of herself at times. On one occasion the two of us, accompanied only by a Chinese Bible woman, visited the village of Tai Wang, about forty miles east of Tatung. Agnes had not previously spoken in public in Chinese, but it was now her turn to do so. As she spoke, she went through a terrible torment of heart and, as soon as she sat down, burst into tears. She was sure no one had understood a word. With quick tact, the Bible woman at once got up and repeated to the Chinese villagers all that Miss Elisson had said, to show her that she had indeed been understood. Then Agnes felt better; but she never lost her shyness.

The Unwanted Maidens

Later, we returned to Tai Wang in the spring of 1931—and found that a cloudburst had flushed the earth from the little ledged fields in the hills. Famine had resulted. As soon as we arrived, the mandarin of the village called us aside. "We have a great problem," he said. He told us that there were eighteen unmarried girls in the village, in their late teens, who were starving. Their families could not—or would

not—provide for them any more. "Could you, Miss Elisson, take them into the Chinese girls' school run by your mission in Tatung?"

Agnes wrung her hands. "I'm sure we could find accommodation, but we have no money to keep them."

"Well, if you can't take them," the mandarin said sadly, "we must sell them to the wandering actors." This would be little better than being sold into prostitution.

I said, very quickly: "I think I can guarantee money for them if the school could guarantee accommodation and their families could provide clothes and bedding." And so it was arranged. We took the girls to the city, tided them over the period of famine, and eventually returned them to Tai Wang when the famine was over.

Agnes and I became very good friends through our travelling together among the villages. After she died of typhus at our hospital some two years later, I never went villaging again.

I Get A Proposal

Nick, our Russian engineer, was very tall and thin. He had a friendly, affectionate nature and loved companionship, but there were no other Russians in Tatung and he missed his own people. I remember how often Miss Garnett used to remark, before she returned home, that it would be a good thing for Nick if he got married—especially to a Russian girl.

One day, just before I returned to England on leave, he said to me: "In the New Year, Mary, I should like to have time off to go to Harbin. I am engaged to a lady and I'd like to go and get married." Trains were running irregularly and, as I was going home via Siberia, we decided to go as far as Peking together. We waited at the Tatung railway station in ten-below-zero weather, at two o'clock one morning. Finally, we got two seats on the train. We dozed off. As dawn began to break, Nick half woke up. Sleepily, he said: "Do you really want to go home, Mary?"

"Of course."

"I've been thinking. Don't you think you would like to marry me? It would save you going home and save me going to Harbin. The bishop could marry us in Peking and we could go back again to Tatung."

"I don't think I could do that," I replied

seriously. "After all, Nick, you are on your way to marry a Russian girl, and that would be better for you." He dropped the subject and went on to Harbin. In Peking, I had a reunion with Ethelreda Fisher, the theological teacher who had been with me during the siege of Tatung, and presently, since she, too, was going home on leave, we started off together. When we got off the train at Harbin, there was Nick, standing forlornly on the platform, pinched with cold.

"Nick," I demanded, "what have you done with your overcoat?"

"I've lost it," he said guiltily. "Could you lend me some money to buy a new one?" I did. Nick was always losing things. He took us to our hotel. "Well, Nick," I said, after we had all thawed out, "how's your wife?"

He blushed. "Well—I—I haven't got one!"

"I'm sorry. What happened?"

"She changed her mind. I'm going back to Peking tomorrow."

After I returned from leave, Nick went to Tsien-Tsien and, presently, we had a letter from Mr. Britland, an S.P.G. official, asking us to prepare a home for Nick and his wife—another Russian girl. We had a small house on the compound whitewashed, collected furniture for him and moved his belongings in. The staff clubbed together and bought him a set of china—Nick was well liked by all—and everything was set for his happy home-coming.

Wedding Was Off Again

One morning, the cook rushed up to see me. "Mr. Nick has come and brought his wife," he announced. "She's very good looking." I hurried down and hailed Nick joyously.

"Congratulations! You've brought her home! We've a house ready for you, but first you must both come and have breakfast with us."

Nick looked strangely ill at ease for a newly-wed. "You must not be so quick," he said. "She is not my wife."

"My goodness, Nick, what went wrong?"

He explained sheepishly. "Well, the girl I was to marry decided not to. Her friend has come up to see what Tatung is like and if she would like to marry me instead." The girl was tall, fair and very shy. She spoke neither English nor Chinese and, I later learned, had

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Len the giant-killer

by JOHN MAY

A superb axeman, Len Rawlinson can split a match right down the middle. And when it comes to felling giant forty-ton trees, he and his gang seem blessed with nine lives

HIGH AMID THE BRANCHES, Len Rawlinson let the cord trickle down to the ground, hauled up the wire rope and attached it to the trunk. Under the lorry out in the meadow, preparing to take a long pull, the driver lay on his back untangling a twist that had jammed the winch. The tree leaned menacingly towards the telephone wires and the road. Rawlinson did not like the look of it at all, and he was right.

Below him, chopping round the base preparatory to sawing, one of the gang sank his axe deep through a brown hole. "Rotten as a pear," he said in disgust. Suddenly something cracked. Rawlinson plumped breathless to the ground, the tree leaned on the wires and crashed across the road. As it fell, the hawser jerked the lorry like a fish on a line. It stopped rolling at last and the driver crawled out shakily, his hand mangled. "We cleared the road, and I took him to find a doctor," Len Rawlinson says.

Britain's timber-felling industry is a tough trade that is in a queer position. Every cubic foot cut is greedily snapped up. Yet, to conserve standing trees as a reserve against international emergency, the Forestry Commission rations felling licences tightly. At the same time, the Commission must allow enough trees to be cut to satisfy the fellers. As a leader of a felling gang for L. P. Foreman and Son, of Chelmsford, Essex, Len Rawlinson is one of the nucleus of skilled men employed by fewer than 2,000 home-grown timber concerns. They would be difficult to replace if imports were cut off and fellers were suddenly wanted.

Everything Depends On Timber

Timber is a basic necessity. Coal, steel, railways, shipping, houses, armaments—*everything* depends on it. In the autumn, under the new 1951 Forestry Act that operated from October 1, the Commission therefore appointed a chairman and advisory committee of twenty-four experts to keep both the fellers and the trees up to strength. They agreed that 26,000,000 cubic feet of hardwood and 7,100,000 feet of softwood should be felled up to the end of next September—about a tenth of our total timber requirements.

The Forestry Commission has a fifty-year plan for increasing home production to thirty-five per cent of our needs. Meantime, home-grown felling, carefully balanced against annual growth, brings in a mixed haul of oak, ash, elm, beech and willow, with a score of rarer timbers like sycamore, cedar, maple and holly. It comes from forests and farms, hedgerows and housing estates. Some trees are worth big money; others that are awkward or dangerous cost courage and cash to get rid of.

"People say it's a job for chaps who are strong in the arm and weak in the head," grins Len Rawlinson. "But you've got to use your brains, too."

Back at the sawmills, Len has a reputation as a fearless climber. "My biggest was a poplar," he says. "I roped it at ninety feet, and it was heartbreaking getting up there, even with climbing irons." Climbing irons strap on the boots with an extension up the leg. Two metal claws on the inside of the instep dig into the bark, and a man pressed flat against a tree, clinging by fingers and spikes, walks up it like a spider.

Although the big poplar was ten times the size of a normal, handy tree, and had to be pulled back from overhanging a lake, they brought it



Len Rawlinson trims a branch from a fallen trunk. The axe-edge is preserved like precious metal

down as planned. "But when the pole carrier came to fetch it, he broke his tackle!"

The first job in felling is "toeing up," to trim the sides straight down where the cut will be. The best timber is in the butt, and good men work close to the ground. They axe out the throat (sometimes called the lip, face or cat hole), undercutting the tree from the direction it has to fall. Chips like dinner plates whizz from under the axe, and every feller bears a scar somewhere from one. Then two men kneel on each side of the trunk and the long crosscut saw flies backwards and forwards 180 times a minute. When it is within a handspan of the throat a pull with the winch, or a couple of wedges banged into the cut, topples the tree.

English fellers do not shout, "Timber!" "But once, outside a factory, we had to sound the lorry horn for each tree," Len remembers. "The factory foreman reckoned his men would waste hours

otherwise, watching and waiting for the fall."

Despite precautions, a crashing tree means anything from two to forty tons momentarily dancing almost where it pleases. Some trees refuse to fall, others won't wait. One flung up at the foot and knocked a feller out with a clean clip on the chin. A willow caught its top, lifted and kicked Len into the river. "If one goes before you're ready," he says, "it's better to be near the butt. You can dodge there, but branches are sure to catch you."

Trees that threaten buildings have to be taken apart in four-foot lengths and the pieces lowered by ropes. When a London feller lopping in the grounds of a hospital accidentally let a small stick fall on to a roof, a white-coated doctor rushed out. "For heaven's sake be careful," he said. "There's £10,000 of X-ray equipment underneath you!" The timber man, fearless at his job, was too scared

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to carry on. Third-party insurance in this kind of work costs 85s. per £100 of wages paid.

Brawny and six feet tall, Rawlinson says, whimsically: "There's always somewhere you can perch like a bird." Balancing on an oak bough, he cut under it in the approved fashion, but it snapped upwards and flung him in the air; luckily, he sprawled across another branch ten feet lower.

One evening, when trying to clear branches that had fouled some wires, he noticed the street lights blinking. Suddenly there was a vivid blue flash, he felt a convulsive jolt that nearly flung his axe away, and the lights blacked out. "That was my personal power cut," he says.

Len finds pleasure in the dangerous job of topping. "The bough you've been sweating at one-handed with a topping axe rolls away and crashes earthwards. You're suddenly under the bright sky, with a wonderful view of the world below."

Flung To The Ground

It is a risky thrill. When the wire rope pulley and the half-severed top of a tree breaks out, the trunk vibrates viciously like a giant tuning fork. One feller was flung thirty-five feet to the ground, landed sitting, coughed up some blood—but took only half a day off to recover.

Trimming out the fallen trunk from the branches, the fellers leave one or two good limbs as levers to turn it over. Finally, every excrescence is axed off as smoothly as if it had been planned. Each man preserves the edge of his seven-pound axe as something precious. An axe that is not true will fling away dangerously, but a good one can be swung by an expert



with amazing accuracy. "Stick a match in the bark," one of Len's gang says, "and he'll split it clean down the length of it."

Not all fellers are sawmill employees. Jack Fletcher, who runs a fleet of timber lorries at Goffs Oak, in Hertfordshire, buys standing timber, fells it, and hauls and sells it to mills that specialize; some take elm for coffin boards, others willow for

artificial limbs. Fletcher's drivers travel up from Sussex, Dorset and Wiltshire by night to dodge traffic. The fellers sleep on the job until it is finished.

A timber feller's standing wage of £7 a week jumps to £9 directly he starts working at heights. But most men work in gangs of from two to four, at piecework rates of 3d. to 5d. a cubic foot. "A good feller should

easily manage 160 cubic feet a day, making his earnings £2 at least," Fletcher says.

Every tree is a gamble. Many look good but come down bad. Violent winds cause a "shake" that splits a tree internally, or makes it a tube of timber with a movable centre. Dead knots, the scars left by lightning, "stop growth" due to drought or disease—all are defects that detract from a tree's worth. For the best timber, trees have to be felled in their prime, and then the trunk will transmit the tick of a watch plainly from one end to the other.

Tree Worth £100

On his travels Rawlinson keeps an eye open for cricket bat willow, as L. P. Foreman are the largest willow specialists in Britain. Cricket bat willow brings the quickest financial return for cultivation of any tree; it can be ready to cut twelve years after planting.

For a perfect bat willow of phenomenal size, Foremans once paid £100. The average large elm may be worth up to £10, an oak or an ash from £5 to £100. But many trees are valued at no more than the price of cutting and carting away, and occasionally one may cost up to £20 to remove.

Demand exceeds supply for all purposes. The mines need a ton of pit-wood to produce every thirty-five tons of coal; three tons of timber go into every new house; the railways require four million sleepers annually. Most of our present supplies come from Canada, Scandinavia and Russia. If they were suddenly cut off, without skilled timber workers to fell homegrown reserves, Britain herself would be up a tree. THE END

THE CASTAWAY

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coward—and there was but one thing to do with a coward.

And now that his protests had been silenced, what would happen? Why, his people *would* obtain gold for the white men and that would be the end of them, Mekeo knew. But a little knowledge, it seemed, brought only misery. Perhaps if the marsalai ate him he would be better off, after all.

The marsalai were not hungry that night, however, and in the morning Mekeo took heart. Possibly the evil inhabitants of his prison isle did not like cowards.

Having breakfasted on crabs and coconuts, he took stock of his prison. For a suitable raft he would need straight trees, and the place where they grew was the high north end of the island. No matter. He gripped his knife and set forth, and presently stood on the very top of the lizard's head with the wind whistling about him and the sea bursting far below against a sheer face of stone.

Good. He could throw the trees over the cliff, go below and retrieve them. The rock wall was broken, he saw, by a small cove to which the slope descended in a wild tangle of vines and brush. He could swim the logs around to the beach there. The sea held no terrors for him.

FOR days Mekeo patiently hacked at the trees with his knife. On the beach his raft took shape. Nights he slept beside it, careful always to draw a circle in the sand.

Then his fortune changed. While he slept one night, the wind strengthened and the sea thundered in the cove to wake him. He had to

fight for his property while the boiling surf all but drowned him and the wind shrieked in the crags above. But all through the terrible hours he stood his ground, and when the sun rose, like a flag of Turkey red calico, he was still there.

Knife in hand, he climbed the cliff again. Another day's labour and the raft would be done.

He reached the top, looked out over the sea and saw something that puzzled him. A boat was struggling towards the island—a small boat such as white men carried on their trading schooners. Each rushing swell lifted it high, bore it forward and left it wallowing in the path of the next. Three men were in it, one of them struggling with oars. They were white men.

Mekeo flung himself down and watched as the boat crept into the cove where his raft was. He did not trust white men.

The men waded ashore, dragging the boat after them. At once, of course, they saw the raft. One swung about to study the base of the cliff. Another let his gaze climb to the very top where Mekeo lay. Then the three seated themselves and talked. Seemingly they had much to discuss.

They were not the best kind of white men, Mekeo decided. Their faces were hairy and their clothes ragged. None wore shoes. But two were tall men, taller than himself, and the third was a great, short-legged barrel of a man with a chest that heaved like the sea when he breathed.

What could they want with the isle of the marsalai?

The morning was all but over when the three stirred again. Two of them turned the boat over to look at the bottom of it; the other walked

along the beach. When Mekeo saw this one again he was near the summit, having discovered the one possible path of ascent. As he approached, Mekeo wriggled among the rocks and squeezed himself flat.

It was the short-legged one. He was a freak, it seemed, for the top of his tremendous head was naked as a rock. Less than a spear throw from Mekeo's covert, he halted to look about him. Then he stepped to the edge of the cliff, and, cupping his hands at his mouth, shouted down at the pair below. "Hallo-o-o there! Nickers! Reavey! Can you hear me?"

An answer drifted up on the wind. "There's a likely lookin' beach at the south end!" shouted the man on top. "Take the boat around and I'll tramp it!" He waited a moment for their answer and then with a grunt stepped away.

MEKEO crept to the cliff's edge and saw the two below wading into the sea with their boat. Behind on the beach lay his raft, its bindings ruthlessly slashed, the logs scattered. His nostrils quivered. In his dusky eyes a flame flickered. For nothing! All that work for nothing!

From the cliff he watched the boat creep along the torn shore; heard the two men in it shouting to their companion as he crashed through the undergrowth. The fellow appeared on the rocks presently and the boat put in for him. Then it crept on again. When at last it touched the beach where Mekeo had first set foot on the isle, its passengers disembarked.

By the time darkness had fallen, they had raised a lean-to at the edge of the sand and were gathering palm branches with which to roof it.

Mekeo did a reckless thing that

night. From his hiding place he clambered down the lizard's neck to the shore, and, hugging the line of rocks, worked his way along to the white men's camp.

A small fire of coconut husks smouldered before the shelter. The three men squatted beside it.

Crablike, on all fours, Mekeo wriggled close enough to overhear the talk, for he understood a little of the white man's language, and remained there like a figure of stone, scarcely breathing. At first he listened with little more than bitter curiosity. But the scraps of information that reached him on the wind presently made him scowl.

He had been right. These were the worst kind of whites.

They were pearlers. At any rate, they were members of a crew of a pearling ship which had been plying its trade somewhere to the westward. These three, it seemed, had contrived and carried out an intrigue to seize the schooner on its return voyage, casting the ship's master overboard in the process. But they had not been strong enough, or informed enough, to sail the vessel through the great storm which had raged out of the westward to test them . . . the same storm which had all but drowned Mekeo in the cove.

Their ship had foundered. In terror they had abandoned her. And but for their finding the isle of the marsalai, at a time when they were half-dead from rowing and bailing their battered small boat, they must surely have perished.

Now they were here—here on Mekeo's prison island—and before they could leave they must repair their boat. Their talk was bitter. Their tempers were on edge.

Two of the men, on discovering



How well he knows that Scott's is the creamiest porridge. *And how right you are* to give him Scott's for breakfast. So nourishing; so economical too—you can easily afford to give him that second helping.



Mekeo's raft, had thought it was an old one left behind by some cast-away long since departed or dead. But Naked-Head, examining the bindings, had insisted they were new, and was convinced that they were not alone on the isle.

"In the morning I'll have a look about, while you two work on the boat," Naked-Head said. "We're in no position to take chances. If there is someone on this forsaken place and it's reported we've been here, we're for it."

Mekeo had heard enough. He must find himself a place of concealment not likely to be discovered. What chance had he otherwise, with only knife and spear to put against pistols?

He rose silently and stepped backwards. And trod squarely on the horny back of a land-crab which had crept up unnoticed to investigate him. Leaping from that loathsome touch in the dark, he fell sprawling.

At once, by the fire, Naked-Head sprang to his feet and spun about with ready pistol. "Who's there?" he shouted. "Show yourself!"

Mekeo lay like a frog.

"Told you there was someone on this island!" Naked-Head bellowed. "Spying on us, too! Listenin' to our talk!" He ventured a step in Mekeo's direction, the gun weaving this way and that before him like a lizard's tongue seeking prey. "Show yourself! Stand out or I'll shoot!" And then, perhaps only because his hand shook with excitement, he did shoot. The bullet screamed past a boulder only inches from Mekeo's legs.

A second later the hunted man was erect and running, with the three of them after him.

He knew he could escape them. But he knew, too, that he must not go straight to his hiding place on the lizard's head, or they would hear him climbing in the dark and in the morning would know where to look for him. He fled along the beach, and when the beach ended he snatched up some stones and ran into the sea.

STANDING there waist-deep in the water, breathing hard from his flight, he marked the progress of his pursuers by the noise they made. When they were close enough, he hurled the stones, one after another. They fell in the brush well back from the beach. The white men halted.

"That way!" one of them shouted. "He's cut for the other side of the island."

Off they went inland, pursuing nothing, while Mekeo swam lightly out to deep water. When he waded from the sea he was far from where they sought him, in the cove where his raft had been demolished, and a little later he arrived at his objective.

That horny crown of the island provided good cover for a hunted man. The undergrowth was thick and there were high piles of rock, veined with passageways and pitted with small caves. Mekeo spent the remainder of the night in the same hiding-place he had used that morning, alert for sounds that did not materialize.

When it was light enough he found a better retreat, a small dark den at the end of a twisting tunnel, and stocked it with coconuts. The nuts would have to provide food and drink for him, with a handful of pigweed and gnetum nuts to chew on now and then. But sooner or later, surely, the white men would tire of hunting him and repair their boat and go away.

The day was not half over when he

heard them coming. In single file they toiled up the lizard's neck, peering this way and that as they advanced.

As they drew closer he wriggled back into his hole. Outside the entrance they halted, winded from the climb.

"I tell you," said a voice, "we're simply wasting our good time. What if the fellow did overhear us? A hundred to one he's a bush native unable to make out a word."

"Only fools take chances," retorted Naked-Head. "They learned a lot from the war, these Kanakas."

He tramped off then with the other

himself against the inevitable bullet.

From the top of the cliff came a shout. "Reavey! Look here!"

The white feet turned. "Yeah, what?"

"Come down here and see."

Red-Beard's footfalls died away, and Mekeo blew out his stored breath. A moment later from the tunnel mouth he saw the two hunters standing at the cliff's edge, peering down and gesturing to the third man, lost from sight below.

Mekeo crept into the open. Not for him the career of a hunted animal, shivering in dark holes while armed

he could see into the outer edge of the cove, see the curving face of the cliff and the crescent of beach at its base. On the beach stood Naked-Head. Down the lesser face of the rock-fall clambered Red-Beard and the other man, to join him.

And there at the sea's edge was a canoe. A canoe of the kind used by Mekeo's own people, hewn from a tree and fitted with graceful, wind-swept outriggers. By it stood a girl. The glare of the sun touched her slim, straight body with gold. At sight of her Mekeo groaned aloud.

She was Walesa, for whose father he had saved the marriage gift. Her presence on the isle of the marsalai meant but one thing. She had come in defiance of her people, in the face of certain banishment, to be with him in this exile.

Joy and despair battled for the mind of Mekeo and neither won. He was sure of one thing only: he must get back to his hiding-place quickly. If he were discovered now he would have to fight, and almost certainly he would lose.

HE returned to the cliff and there wormed his way to the edge, to look down. The white men had already done the expected. Upside down on the sand lay the canoe, its bottom staved in. Helpless, Mekeo bit his lip until the blood ran.

The men were talking to Walesa, and Mekeo knew she understood at least some of what they were saying because he himself had taught her the pidgin of the plantations. It was so. She answered them and they nodded. Naked-Head, peering now at the rim of the cliff, cupped his huge hands to his mouth.

"Hallo-o-o, Mekeo!"

Mekeo moved not a muscle.

But they knew he was there somewhere. They knew that if they called loud enough he would hear. He was to come down, Naked-Head bellowed, and give himself up. No harm was intended; they wished only to talk to him. He was to show himself at once. Otherwise his wife-to-be, Walesa, would be held as hostage and they would not be responsible for what happened to her.

All this was yelled at Mekeo in the pidgin of the plantations, and he writhed under the impact of it, realizing how slight was the choice left to him. If he obeyed they would kill him, and perhaps Walesa with him. If he defied them, they would shoot Walesa to punish him, maybe.

Well, then, what? He could postpone the answer for a time by pretending not to hear the ultimatum. Since they wanted him very badly, perhaps they would wait until they were sure.

They did wait, after several times repeating the command and getting no response. The afternoon being nearly over, they made their way out of the cove and returned to their camp on the south beach, taking Walesa with them. And Mekeo retired to his hiding-place to think desperately what he might do.

When the moon rose, he crept from his cave to the high point of land from which the white men's camp could best be seen. What he observed gave him no hope. They had lit a fire again before the lean-to, and Walesa sat near it.

From that distance he could not be sure, but by the awkwardness of her infrequent movements, he thought her legs were bound.

Nearby sat the man called Nickers. The other two, as Mekeo watched, left the camp and walked along the beach a little way, where they talked for a

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

THIS is how I always felt when I was a little girl—and I still do, in a way—shy, timid, alone. The photo was taken at a camp for Girl Guides in Sweden, when I was fourteen, and it was the first time I had ever appeared in public: I was one of a troupe of eleven pierrots.

I enjoyed it so much that two of the others and I formed ourselves into an act and appeared at the Pleasure Gardens in Stockholm. Then we toured the whole of Sweden on bicycles with another troupe: we got no pay, only our keep, but it was fun. Then, at last, I got a real chance, and won a scholarship to the National Theatre, and went from there to the films.

But my early childhood was desperately unhappy. My father was a maker of top-hats—a dying trade! When I was a year old we emigrated to Australia, but he did no better there, so we came back.

I had learnt a little English in Australia and put it to some use. My mother caught me eating sweets one day. "Where did you get them?" she demanded, for my parents were too poor to give me either sweets or the money to buy them. So it came out: I had been reciting English nursery rhymes in the pastry shops in return for sweets.

My family was always on the move, and by the time I was thirteen I had been to fifteen



schools, so I never learnt anything. I was always lonely and used to tell the girls at the new school that I was a rich princess and such-like tales to impress them. But they soon found me out and laughed at me.

When I was thirteen I was put into a store to earn some money, and, for some extraordinary reason, they put me behind the men's underwear counter. I looked so young and tiny that potential customers always shied away when they saw me: I suppose they didn't like to talk about underwear to a little girl like me. So I never sold any.

I left to go to a factory which made suits, and for eight hours a day I slaved on a bench with four other little girls. We were never allowed to talk or sing and my pay was 25s. a week.

Today she is a film star working in Britain. For her name, turn to page 33

man, leaving a big red-bearded man behind. For a time Red-Beard sat smoking a cigarette, a silent sentry at the very door of Mekeo's retreat—the hunted man could not see him but could smell the burning tobacco—and then, tossing away the butt, the fellow wandered off a little distance and used half an hour poking into odd cracks and crevices with a stick.

IN his cell, Mekeo suffered. The air was foul. His throat burned. He dared not move to relieve the torment of aching muscles. But like a beast baring its claws, he clutched his spear the more tightly.

He could see Red-Beard's feet, fish-belly white under the torn and flapping cuffs of the man's trousers. That was all he could see, but it was enough. They were purposeful feet. The man had at last recognized the brush-growth of the tunnel as a place demanding investigation. He strode forward. The flapping of his trouser legs was loud in Mekeo's ears. Loud as the beating of wings.

Outside the tunnel the man halted. Inside, Mekeo drew back his throwing arm in the narrow passage, tensing

men tracked him down! He had a plan and they were playing squarely into it. Something in the cove had caught their attention—perhaps the footprints he had left on the beach when wading ashore the night before.

And at the low end of the island, unguarded now, lay their boat—battered by the storm perhaps, far from seaworthy, but sound enough to have brought them to the island, and, therefore, sound enough to carry Mekeo to safety!

Spear in hand, knife tucked in his barkcloth laplap, Mekeo wriggled through the brush. For the first hundred yards his belly rubbed the ground. Then, shielded by a high shoulder of rock, he rose and fled erect.

He was free! Even if they saw him now they could never overtake him, nor at that distance could they hope to halt so swift a target with their bullets! His heart sang through its pounding. He reached the crest of the last descent, turned scornfully for a farewell look at his tormentors—and stopped as though the red earth had gripped his feet.

From that last high point of land

moment and then separated, Red-Beard proceeding towards the cove, the other disappearing among the trees.

Mekeo retreated. Near the entrance to his hiding-place he dropped to his knees and began to scratch a hole in the red earth. That done, he descended the rockfall to the cove.

Half an hour later, when Red-Beard arrived, Mekeo was waiting. "Here," he said.

The man was startled. Halting, he swung up his pistol and lurched about. But when he saw Mekeo was not armed—was, in fact, standing helpless against the cliff wall only a few feet from him—he recovered.

"So you've come to your senses. No tricks, now! Step over here."

Mekeo did as he was told, cringing a little, holding his clenched hands hard against his stomach.

"What's that you're hiding?" Red-Beard rapped out. He seized a brown wrist and twisted it. Mekeo cried out in pain.

"Well now—wait a minute!" Red-Beard exclaimed. "What is this?" He was looking at something shiny in the palm of Mekeo's hand. At a silver coin—two of them, in fact—mixed generously with red grit. The moonlight struck a pale glow from them, and when the man raised his head to peer more closely at Mekeo's face, there was a matching glint in his eyes.

"Where did you get these?" he demanded. "Out with it!"

The grip on his wrist tightened, and the pistol was thrust against his stomach. "I asked you a question!"

"Me dig," Mekeo said. "Dig there." He pointed to the cliff top.

"You dug these up? Are there more of them?"

"Me think, yes," said Mekeo fearfully. "Many more."

Red-Beard looked at him for a long minute. Then he said: "Take me there. Take me there now."

MEKEO climbed in silence, with the white man toiling at his heels. At the top he waited, in an attitude of dejection, for the bearded one to catch up with him.

In a moment more he was pointing to the red earth in front of his former hiding-place.

"Stand back," Red-Beard ordered. "No clever tricks, now, remember—I warn you!"

Obediently, Mekeo fell back, while the white man, on his knees, scraped eagerly at the ground with his fingers.

Presently the white man voiced an exclamation and held up a silver guilder. He found three more before the coarse sand had worn the skin from his fingers. Stiffly, then, he rose. "You any idea who buried this stuff here?"

Mekeo shook his head.

Red-Beard thoughtfully rubbed his hairy chin. For moments he was silent, his gaze fixed on the earth at his feet. "What we need is a spade," he said then. "There's something worth while buried here, you can count on it. Nobody would go to the trouble of burying just a handful of coins in such a spot. Now see here, my boy"—his glance lifted to Mekeo's expressionless face—"you work with me on this and you won't be sorry. Do me a good turn and I'll do you one. Savvy?"

Mekeo moved his head slowly up and down.

"We'll keep this to ourselves," said Red-Beard. "Those friends of mine are no good; they'd kill you if they could. That girl of yours, too—they mean to be rid of her as soon as they get their hands on you. But you help



me and I'll see that no harm comes to either of you. Right?"

"Me help," said Mekeo.

"Good. Now then, the spade. There's one in the boat, down there by the camp. You can manage it, hey? You grab that spade and hurry back with it. Off with you!"

Mekeo murmured something to show he understood, then turned and darted away.

At the edge of the beach he halted. There were clouds in the sky but the moon was free of them at the moment and the beach lay bright as a streak of white clay on a sorcerer's skin. The boat lay, bows in the water, twenty paces from where he crouched. By the fire sat Walesa and the man called Nickers.

Like a crab Mekeo crawled over the sand, timing his movements to concur with the mutter of breaking waves on the beach. He reached the boat unheard, rose to his knees, put forth a hand and seized the spade that lay under the forward thwart. He turned. Deliberately he let the tool swing with a metallic clang against the boat.

The man called Nickers leaped and whirled in one swift motion. Mekeo stood stock helpless.

Gun in hand, Nickers halted before him.

"Drop that spade."

Mekeo did not drop it. He wagged his head vigorously. "Me no fight with shovel, Master! Me dig!"

"Eh? What's that?"

"Me get'm shovel so fella red grass 'long face, he dig."

"Reavey? Dig? For what?"

Mekeo put a hand to his mouth and spat something into it. Like a brown statue he stood before the white man, the hand extended, the coin gleaming in his palm. Nickers examined it, whistled softly, raised his head and called softly down the beach. He then prodded Mekeo towards the fire. "None of that," he warned, as his prisoner swerved aside towards the wide-eyed girl sitting there. "Just squat. Be quiet!"

Naked-Head appeared presently. He could not have been far off, or the summons would not have reached him above the mutter of the surf. At sight of Mekeo he uttered a triumphant grunt. But Nickers silenced him by showing him the coin.

"Friend Reavey is playing a little game with us, it seems," said Nickers

coolly. "He sent the Kanaka to steal the spade. The boy can tell us what's up, I expect. Have a go at him; your pidgin's better than mine."

His small eyes gleaming, Naked-Head halted before Mekeo and fired a question. Mekeo timidly answered. Other queries followed; then, with a nod of satisfaction, the fellow turned to his companion.

"Treasure," he said bluntly. "Someone's buried it here—wartime stuff, most likely—and Reavey's stumbled on it. Means to do us out of it. He's waiting now for the spade." He turned to Mekeo. "Up with you! Lead the way!"

"And the girl here?" Nickers demanded.

Naked-Head caught Mekeo's arm and thrust him towards the seated girl.

"Tell her she's to stay put," he ordered. "If she tries to get away while we're gone, it's the end of you."

Mekeo would have spoken to Walesa in any case, no matter what the punishment. The white men could not understand his tongue. But he had time for only a few words before they dragged him off.

ON the clifftop, Red-Beard was waiting, and at the sound of approaching footsteps he lurched up from his knees. He had been digging again despite his bleeding hands. In a neat stack at the edge of the excavation lay half a dozen of the silver coins.

Now, as Mekeo paced towards him, he said suddenly: "It's about time!"

And then his gaze fell on the others coldly regarding him from the edge of the brush, and his mouth sagged.

"So you'd put something over on us," said Naked-Head, halting at last. "Robbing us of our share."

"What share?" retorted the trembling Red-Beard. "You found nothing!"

"We're in this together, aren't we?"

"For the pearls, yes. But nothing was said about—"

"You didn't mean to pull a fast one, did you?" said Naked-Head in a new, soft, suddenly sinister voice. "You weren't planning to shoot us down in cold blood as soon as the opportunity offered?"

"You've got me wrong, I tell you. Stand back now! Let me alone, both

of you! I—" He needed a gun and his gun lay by the rocks some distance away. He suddenly wheeled and flung himself towards it, and was brought down by Naked-Head, who, with a prodigious leap, landed squarely on his back.

They rolled on the ground, the two of them, while Nickers circled with upraised pistol to get in a blow. For the forgotten Mekeo that was enough. His moment had come. He snatched up the little pile of coins and ran.

That brought them to their senses quickly enough. But the direction of his flight bewildered them. He ran not down the lizard's neck but straight for the edge of the precipice.

At the rim of the awesome rockfall Mekeo paused. He looked down. Below, on the moon-silver water, close in against the cliff, lay a boat—the white men's boat. He shouted. The girl at the oars saw him on the cliff's edge and waved.

Mekeo stepped into space. With feet close together, arms hugging his chest, he dropped from the cliff like one of the logs he had tossed from the same dizzy brink.

WHEN he rose, gasping, to the surface, he swam to the boat and pulled himself up, opened his fist and let the silver coins fall at Walesa's feet. As he clambered aboard and seized the oars, a swift look upwards showed him the cliff was still empty.

"They will shoot at us," he warned. "When they do—"

The report of a gun echoed from the island. On the edge of the precipice appeared Nickers, shooting wildly as he danced up and down in the moonlight.

"Down!" Mekeo ordered. The girl obeyed. But he himself did not lie down. Mekeo, the coward, only doubled his efforts at the oars. Nor did he flinch when one of the bullets grooved the seat beside his leg.

No others came so close, and presently the white men desisted. But Mekeo rowed with all his strength, until the island was no more than a formless blot against the sky. When at last he curbed his efforts, he was exhausted but smiling.

He spoke quietly to Walesa and she sat up. He made room for her beside him; gave her an oar. Together they rowed towards the distant mainland.

"You did well," Mekeo remarked then. "I was afraid you would not be able to free yourself in time. Or that you would think me too big a coward to jump."

"Coward? You?" Walesa looked at him as a girl should look at the man she loves. "I will make my father listen to you, Mekeo. What you said of the white men is true. Now I know!"

Mekeo nodded. Much of their good fortune, he knew, had been pure luck. No man could have foretold what the white men would do when shown the treasure—only that whatever they did would divide them. "We fight only our enemies," he shrugged. "White men are different. Show them something they value much, and not even the wisest among them can tell his enemies from his friends."

Wryly he smiled. "For knowing this I was banished from my village. Yet had I not known it, you and I would be dead now."

He was silent for a while. Presently, with a smile, he bent to gather up the silver coins at his feet.

"I saved all but a small part of the marriage gift," he said. "Your father can mark the missing portion down as the price of wisdom. Sometimes it is more costly."

THE END



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TENDER TO MOONLIGHT

Continued from page 15

was unpretentious, the food was excellent and the wine reasonable. The only drawback was that Charlie Botten used it regularly, and might well be there tonight. He liked Charlie, he was even fond of his company at times, but on this occasion, no.

Andrew's anxiety was relieved in part as soon as he entered the place. Mr. Botten was there, but he had a companion, a grey-haired man, and they were already half-way through their dinner. When the head waiter suggested a table on the other side of the room, Andrew raised no objection.

Mr. Botten saw the newcomers and made a crouching rise, clutching his napkin, in acknowledgment of Andrew's nod.

"Somebody you know?" Miss Meriden inquired.

"An old friend," Andrew said.

She smiled across the table when they were seated, and Andrew was glad that the old friend had a companion.

The meal was a success. Andrew never could recall afterwards exactly what they had talked about; all he ever knew was that they had both talked a great deal and that what they said had been trivial and light-hearted and yet, in some magical way, profoundly important.

Then, as he turned to order coffee, he became aware of a movement on the other side of the room. He was conscious of Charlie Botten again, and glanced round.

Charlie and his guest had risen from their chairs. They came across the carpet to reach the central passage between the tables, Charlie leading the way, his bulk obscuring the smaller man. He gestured vaguely in the direction of Andrew, something between a wave of farewell and a hiker's hitch-signal. An instant later Andrew saw the face of his companion. He stared. There was no mistaking that affable, beaming countenance above the rough tweed fabric of the ill-cut jacket. Clap a hat over the high bald forehead, and the picture was complete. Charlie Botten's guest was Mr. Jolly-Face.

CHARLIE BOTTEN had returned before Andrew could recover himself. He introduced him to Ruth without cordiality. "Miss Meriden, may I introduce Mr. Botten?"

"How do you do? I thought it must be Miss Meriden. I wanted to come across all evening to meet you. Unfortunately I had to defer that pleasure on account of my guest."

"Isn't he waiting for you?" Andrew asked.

"No. I pushed him into a taxi."

Andrew looked at him. "His face was very familiar. Should I know him, do you think?"

"There's no telling whom you know," Charlie said casually. "He's just a wartime colleague of mine. Hadn't seen him for years." He pulled up a chair. "May I join you for a moment?"

Andrew nodded coldly. Ruth was looking a little puzzled. Andrew explained that Charlie Botten was the friend who had collected the facts about the boat.

"I want to ask about the mysterious yawl," Charlie said. "Have you had any luck?"

"We think we've found it," Ruth said. Andrew flashed a warning look, but she was gazing at Charlie Botten.

"That's nice," Charlie looked at

him, smiling. "So Miss Meriden is co-operating. Where do you think you've found it?"

Andrew looked at him, and found himself flushing. If he started suspecting Charlie, he might as well wrap up. Why, Charlie was one of his oldest friends. He began to explain, reluctantly. He described, with the girl's assistance, the supposed location. Botten asked questions, and heard the details of Ruth's misadventure. Then he wondered whether they were on the right track. Meriden had talked of a mill, not a windmill. "Have you checked the spot on a large-scale map?" he inquired.

"Miss Meriden didn't wait for maps," Andrew said. "She dashed off to Britsea at once."

"Anyway, we'll know all about it tomorrow afternoon," Ruth said cheerfully. "Andrew and I are going down by car."

Andrew's heart jumped. "Andrew and I"—it had a delightful sound.

"Maybe," Charlie said. "But if you know what you're going to find, it will be easier to find it. Let's all go to my place for coffee, and we'll investigate."

OBJECTION was useless. In half an hour they were in the Botten flat with coffee and liqueurs. The owner had a collection of maps most efficiently indexed. Groper's Wade was contained within a small section, but the scale was enormous.

"Here you are!" Mr. Botten pointed with a pencil. "Groper's Mill. The circle represents the mill structure, and here's the landing stage, all right."

The windmill was about half a mile inland. A creek wound in from the estuary—one of many creeks on the map—and close to the mill, a small rectangle was drawn, jutting out from the bank into the narrow stream. The mill cottage was defined by a larger rectangle on the land side of the small circle.

"There you are," Charlie said. "Everything except the yawl. Here's your road, Andrew. It must run parallel to the track you took, Ruth. There's only the one way across the swamp. Here's the station. Where would you place the garbage tip?"

Ruth took the map and indicated the place. Andrew frowned. He resented Mr. Botten's easy friendliness. He also resented the way Ruth accepted it. But most of all



"Before we were married I kept telling you that I couldn't even boil water, and you just used to laugh and laugh and laugh..."

he resented the new authority that had crept into Charlie Botten's voice as he questioned Ruth about the man she had thought was watching her.

"Look here," Andrew said at last, "Ruth ought to be in bed now. She's had a hard day, and we'll doubtless have another hard day tomorrow. So if you'll excuse us, Charlie—"

Charlie said quietly: "I wouldn't go down there tomorrow if I were you. I think you ought to leave it all to me."

"Leave it all! . . ." Andrew began indignantly and then swallowed his indignation. "Are you off your rocker? All this stuff about being followed has gone to your head. I know all about that. Why, the other night I believed I was being shadowed by the man you've just had as a dinner guest! Every time I notice a fellow in the street I think he's on my trail. Ruth's right. It's all imagination. I'm even beginning to have doubts about that Brussels business."

"And possibly there was no Kusitch," Charlie suggested. "All right. I wash my hands of you." He grinned. "When you get the yawl in order, you may take me for a sail. My own opinion is that it was never brought back to England, but that's just, as I say, an opinion. It might be as well, though, if it were at the bottom of the sea."

"Why do you say that?"

"I don't know," Charlie shrugged. "Put it down to a hunch. I don't like trouble. I never did. If the yawl's gone, there's no more harm in it. If it's tied up by that old windmill, heaven knows what sort of mess is going to come out of it."

"What could come out of it?"

Mr. Botten considered the question for a moment, before saying mildly, "I don't know. But there's one bit of advice I can give you. Keep a sharp look-out when you're on the road tomorrow. If you're followed by a car, don't go anywhere near Groper's Wade. Just take a joyride into the country and come back to town."

No car followed them. Andrew glanced frequently at the driving mirror of the small car he had hired, and Ruth kept a sharp lookout through the rear window.

The sky was overcast and there were omens of heavy weather far out in the estuary. Not a day for a joyride. The sea, when they saw it across a tumble of dunes, was wan and melancholy under the dour spread of cloud, yet Ruth seemed astonishingly carefree.

Could he ever have thought her smug? Of course not. She was direct, friendly, gay. Andrew was happy to be beside her. He had not been so happy since his return from Greece.

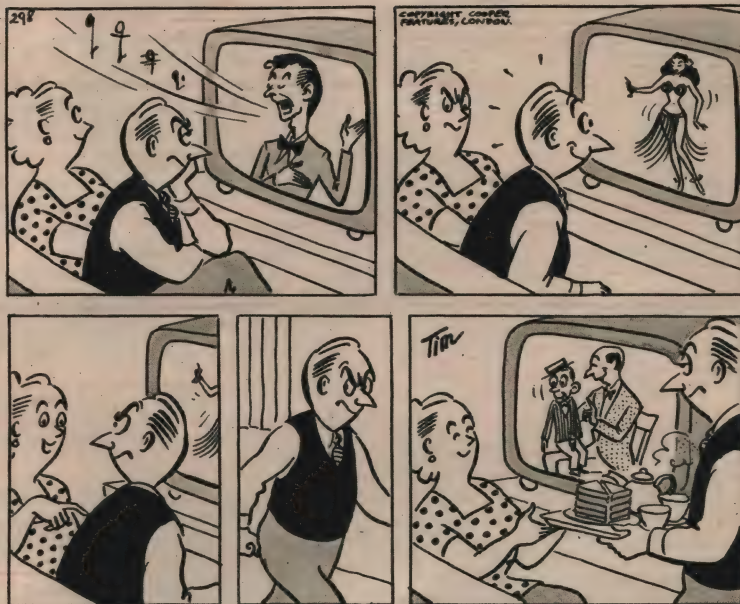
Not even the slough of Groper's Wade under a drizzle of rain could damp his spirits. He was detached from all dreariness by a singular enchantment. He had only to turn his head to see the warm loveliness of the girl beside him.

The road across Groper's Wade was defined by water-filled ruts that reflected the dull light in the overcast sky. There was no trace of the windmill ahead; only a featureless haze. Slush spouted from the wheels of a truck filled with junk for the rubbish tip.

Andrew drew level and shouted out to the driver, who brought his vehicle to a stop at the turn-in to the dump.

"How's the road across the

OH, JOHNNY!



marsh?" Andrew asked. "Is it safe?"

"Aye!" The reply rasped through the sound of the truck's revving engine. "Safe enough if you stick to it." The man grinned broadly. "Don't try any short cuts."

He was quite incurious. He let in his clutch and swung his load of junk into a sharp turn. Another man was standing in the entry to the tip, waving the driver to come on.

"Identify either of them?" Andrew asked Ruth.

She shook her head. "Neither is like the man I saw; but what does it matter?"

"Just wondering." He was still quite happy about it, but the marsh, now that they were actually upon it, started a germ of uneasiness in his mind.

The panic of Ruth on her first visit was easy to understand now. The place was fertile ground for any seed of fear.

The rutted track seemed solid enough, but he still drove slowly. There might be a fault somewhere, and it would be no fun getting stranded with a hired car.

Then, indistinctly in the distance, they saw the mill.

They both peered forward through the windscreen, eager for the details that gradually became apparent as they approached. The windmill was like a grey monolith perched on a small knoll with a tumble of low dunes behind it. The monolith grew into an octagonal tower with a domelike cap, and the skeleton remains of the sail-frames, the four long whips or arms, became visible. There had once been a paved yard between the mill and the cottage, but most of the stones had been entirely covered by the coarse grass. Andrew advanced the car gingerly into this space, and backed and turned before pulling up.

Ruth moved to get out, but he restrained her. They kept their seats for a moment, listening. There was a sound of wind and the squeaking complaint of corroded metal as the arms of the mill shuddered and swung a little. Nothing else.

Now the two stepped out and stood gazing up at the massive structure of the mill. The vane that had once been there to rotate the cap and bring the sails to the wind had long since gone. Windows were dark, boarded-up slots. There was a

heavy, weather-bleached door. It was shut.

They looked at the cottage—a simple two-storeyed affair in an advanced state of dilapidation. Here the door had fallen in, the window-panes had been broken, the roof had a hole in it.

"I doubt if this will add much to the value of the estate," Andrew said. He grasped her arm and guided her across the yard and round the knoll of the mill. Then they stopped. There, before them, were the winding creek and the landing stage. And there, too, was the boat.

The tall mast of the craft swung slowly from side to side as the hull yielded to the tidal movement in the creek. Weather-stained, battered, her peeling paint stained with rust, she was hardly recognizable as a craft many people had desired. Yet, as she swung round a little with the movement of the water, they could see, showing faintly through the Calabrian fisherman's casual effort to over-paint them, the words on her square stern: TENDER TO MOONLIGHT.

Andrew drew a deep breath. "She's got something to tell us: why Kusitch started for England to find her, why he was murdered in Brussels, why. . . ." He broke off. "Anyway, let's look at her."

The craft was secured by an anchor and a mooring buoy, and also made fast to the landing stage by a steel cable with sufficient slack to take care of the rise and fall of

the tide. Rope fenders had been slung to protect her against the landing stage.

Neglect of the paintwork was even more apparent on closer inspection. The hot sun of the Mediterranean had dried out the oils and whitened the woodwork. Paint had peeled and scaled away, but one could still make out the registration number on the bows, SS729, showing through the over-paint applied at Zavrana.

No doubt Ernest Jansen—Meriden's skipper—had done his best to bed her down safely after her voyage home. Sail covers had been lashed in position and everything left shipshape, but now a roughly folded tarpaulin lay on the deck, forward of the coach-roof. Andrew stared at it uneasily. Plainly that tarpaulin had covered the open well of the craft; clearly it had been removed quite recently—today, or yesterday.

Andrew stepped down on to the deck and reached out a hand to his companion.

"Now we're on board," she said, "what do we search for and where do we search?"

THEY stood in the well of the craft and looked round. The auxiliary engine had a teak housing secured by a padlock. At least there was the appearance of security, but, when Andrew tested the padlock, he found that a hacksaw had been used on it, and a slight tug brought the hinged part open. He told himself that his worst fears might be unjustified. A deserted craft was an irresistible attraction to marauding boys or petty thieves. Parts of an engine could be removed, sold to a junk dealer, used. But when he lifted the cover of the housing, the engine seemed to have been cleaned quite recently. The magneto looked particularly bright and might have been placed in position that day.

"That's damned odd," he said aloud.

An experienced man like Ernest Jansen, knowing that the craft would be tied up for months, if not years, would never have left it there. The engine housing might be sound and well constructed, but the moist sea air would penetrate at various points, and moist sea air was bad for magnetos. One either took them ashore or stowed them in a more protected place. Andrew was no sailor, but he knew that much.

"What does it mean?" Ruth asked, sensing his apprehension.

"I don't know." He stood up and looked around.

Ruth climbed on to the deck, stepped ashore and mounted the knoll.

"Not a soul in sight," she announced, "if that's what's bothering you."

He nodded. He could feel and smell the emptiness. He could smell something else, too. He went down on his haunches beside the engine and sniffed. Paraffin, and newly poured. Someone had been using paraffin to clean the engine. He picked up a cigarette end and examined it. It had not been there very long.

Ruth came on board again. "What have you found?" she asked.

He threw the butt into the creek. "Nothing," he said, "nothing of importance." There was no point in alarming her.

The padlock of the sliding companion hatch had been treated in the same way as that on the engine housing. Andrew opened the hatch and led the way below deck. There

THE HUMAN MACHINE

Give to get

HOW often you hear Hit said: "If only I had just myself to please." But few of us are ever in that position—and if we were, we would probably be unhappy.

You can't just please yourself and expect the world to respect and like you. You can't be selfish and happy.

The fundamental law of human relationship is that the more you give, the more you will receive.

by ROFFE THOMPSON

was a miniature galley on one side of the entrance, a small pantry or store-room on the other side. Both were completely empty, stripped of whatever fittings they had once contained. Beyond was a fairly roomy saloon with a chart table in the centre and bunks on either side. A door forward gave access to a small water closet, and right forward, divided from this cubicle by a wooden partition with a sliding panel, was the usual chain locker.

There were fitted drawers for clothes under the bunks, and one of them contained a piece of old blanket, a piece of oilskin and a length of string; more evidence that Ernest Jansen had been thorough in preparing for the lay-up, for it was plain enough that here the magneto had been wrapped and stowed.

The wrappings were the sole find. The saloon, like the galley and pantry, had been stripped. At some time, in Dalmatian or Calabrian waters, someone had gone through the craft and left only the bare boards. Was it rational, then, to suppose that anything of value remained in the yawl?

And yet—and yet had Kusitch thrown away his life in pursuit of a myth? Had Kretchmann and Haller committed murder for nothing?

Andrew went forward and opened the panel of the chain locker, but it was empty. He rapped on timbers and looked behind the drawers. There were no secret cavities that he could discover.

Behind him, Ruth said: "If the masts were hollow, you could hide a few Rembrandts in them."

He grinned sheepishly. They went on deck and she climbed ashore again and watched him from the landing stage, while he rummaged among fragments of canvas and broken tools and other odds and ends in the sail lockers.

"While you do that," she said after a moment, "I'm going to take a look at my new cottage. It may be full of Persian miniatures or Aztec bird baths."

ANDREW looked after her gloomily as she limped up the knoll. Somewhere in this shabby tub there was or had been something, but Andrew could think of no further place where he might search. If there were a concealed cache, an unsuspected space behind an undiscovered bulkhead, he did not know what he could do about it, short of ripping the craft to pieces.

He looked down at the rust-marked, oil-stained boards on which he stood. Each one had a finger hole for ease in lifting. An idea came to him, but when he translated it into action it was with no eagerness. He lifted one of the boards from the bilge stringer and detached it from its ledge on the middle bearer. He lifted a second board, but he was already convinced that no one would have hidden an art treasure in such a place. The wash of water in the bilge was filthy with grease and drippings of oil from the engine. Ribs, strakes and keelson were smeared with something that looked like tar, and the heavy slabs of metal that served as ballast had been daubed with the stuff. He tapped one of the bars with a screwdriver from a locker. Pig-iron.

Rocking in the slow swirl of the bilge was a tin can with part of a bright, new label attached.

If he had not observed it he might not have realized that someone had

been bailing out the bilge, though the little depth of water in the bottom should have told him that at once. Since Jansen tied up the craft, the bilge would have filled with water in one way or another. The fact that it had been bailed out linked up with the curious business of the magneto. Some sort of overhaul had been attempted. The floorboards had been removed to get at the propeller shafting and coupling.

Andrew gazed down at the dark water and the iron pigs for a moment. Then he replaced the floorboards and closed the companion hatch, putting the padlock back as he had found it. He saw then that the deck was almost level with the landing stage and the tide was still running in.

Ruth called from the knoll. "There's a man coming along on a bike."

STEPPING ashore, Andrew climbed the knoll to Ruth's side. The man was pedalling slowly across the Wade, taking the bumps, weaving and twisting in his course to avoid the worst of the depressions in the track. He was carrying a two-gallon petrol tin. The fact was too peculiar not to be taken as a warning. If the tin contained petrol the fellow's objective must be the yawl. At once the other peculiarities fell into line: the sawn padlocks, the cigarette end, the magneto.

At that moment the cyclist saw them. No doubt he also saw the car in the yard. He came on without hesitation, quite confidently, as if he knew his way about. He was a man of about forty-five, with a hard, weather-tanned face and fairish, grizzled hair. He wore toil-marked grey slacks and an old brown jacket over a dark-green sweater. He dismounted and leaned the bike against the mill. He was cheerful and friendly, with a proprietorial assurance. He put an empty pipe in his mouth.

"Afternoon," he said. "Come out to see the mill?"

"That's it," Andrew agreed. "I suppose it's quite noted."

"I suppose." The man nodded

and grinned, jumped into the well of the yawl and began to pour the petrol into the fuel tank aft.

Andrew and Ruth followed to the landing stage and watched him.

"What do you think you're doing with that craft?" Andrew inquired, slowly, after a while.

"Making her work," came the affable reply. "Owner's instructions. Mr. Robison says make her work. So, I make her work." Having disposed of the petrol, he uncovered the engine, fussed with the carburettor for a moment, then swung the starting handle. There was no result.

"Is Mr. Robison the owner?" Andrew asked.

"No, he's the boss." The fellow went on with his work.

"Who's Mr. Robison?" Andrew persisted, ignoring an attempt by Ruth to draw him from the landing stage.

"He has a garage, along the London Road."

"Who's the owner of the craft?"

"That's not my business." The mechanic straightened himself. He was less affable now. "And it's not yours. This is private property. You have no rights here. You want to look at the windmill, no one is going to object." He took his pipe out of his mouth.

Andrew glared down at him. "I'm well aware it's private property," he snapped. "It belongs to this lady; all of it—the mill, the cottage, the yawl. What's more, she hasn't ordered any repairs by Mr. Robison or anybody else. You can leave the engine alone. Now get out of that craft and take yourself off, before I bring the police here."

For a moment an ugly expression came into the man's face, then he changed back to the affable mechanic and smiled a slightly bewildered smile.

"There must be a mistake," he said. "The craft by the windmill, Mr. Robison said to me, and there's no other windmill here nor another craft. You talk to Mr. Robison. He'll be here any minute. Promised to give me a hand with the engine because the owner's in such a hurry. . . ." He broke off as he turned to look towards the track

across the marsh from the slight elevation of the deck. "See, he's coming now!" he said. "You can talk to him."

The newcomer, like his mechanic, had a bike, but instead of riding he was wheeling it and balancing a jerrican on frame and handlebars. He was a tall man in an over-long grey raincoat, and he had a cloth cap pulled down over his eyes. He leaned the bike against the wall of the mill, lifted the jerrican from it and then came down the knoll with the long, grey coat flapping against his legs, and Andrew saw that under it he was wearing slacks and a seaman's sweater of rough, blue wool.

Andrew stared blankly. He had been right after all to suspect the man in the long coat. He had been followed to the Blandish Gallery the day before. He had led the man to Ruth Meriden and she had been trailed to Groper's Wade. . . . The man in the long coat was also the tramp who had watched her. Once the yawl had been found, he and his mechanic had lost no time.

Andrew stared into the dark, deep-set eyes that had focused on the picture in the window of the Blandish Gallery, and once more he had an odd feeling of familiarity, a sense of having seen the man somewhere else in different circumstances.

THE mechanic said: "I'm glad you have come, Mr. Robison. These two people are trying to make trouble. The man claims that the woman owns the craft we have instructions to repair. I have told him there must be some mistake. Perhaps you will be able to straighten the matter out."

"By all means let us straighten the matter out." The newcomer put down the jerrican on the edge of the landing stage. "We need to speak plain without making fictions. The Doctor Maclaren knows there is no mistake. So, I think, does the Fräulein Meriden. Before I have had only the distant pleasure to see you, gracious Fräulein."

He touched his cap and made a slight bow, and in that moment of mocking gesture the sharp, ferret-like features of a face that had the immobility of a ventriloquist's dummy were fully revealed. Andrew knew him. The chambermaid at the Risler-Moircy had called him Herr Schlegel. He had waited that morning in Brussels to inspect the suite from which Kusitch had been taken in the night. Now the dark eyes that were the living part of the face had the same evil assurance.

"The Herr Doktor and I have met once before," he said. "He showed kindness to me. He left in the room of the man Kusitch an empty envelope. When I find an empty envelope, I have the conviction there may have been something in it. I hope the Herr Doktor will continue to co-operate." He turned to address the mechanic. "I believe that will be his best policy—best for himself, best for the gracious Fräulein. What do you think, Haller?"

Haller! Kretchmann and Haller—Inspector Jordaens's friends! Andrew checked his thoughts. This was not the moment to abuse himself for his folly in exposing Ruth to danger. Now, as Haller, with a smile, stepped from the deck of the yawl on to the landing stage, Andrew retreated a step from Kretchmann and drew the girl towards him with an arm round her. His one thought now was to protect her.

To be concluded next week



"My lords, ladies and gentlemen. Just before setting out for this dinner tonight, I said to myself . . ."



THE TROUBLE WITH CONWAY

Continued from page 17

was an orthodox, old-world little character with pince-nez and a surprisingly acute manner.

"You didn't want to bother me about opening the house. Quite so," he said, polishing his glasses. "Quite so. And now you'll want to know about your—ah—finances."

Conway didn't say anything. Grosling finished polishing his glasses, carefully clipped them on and looked at him. "Well, I must tell you right away, they're not as healthy as one could wish. No cause for alarm, of course. The house is still a useful little property—I don't imagine you'll want to keep it on?"

"No. No, I don't suppose I will," Conway said carefully. "I don't think I'll want to keep the cinema, either. I know that must shock you—"

"Shock me?" Grosling was looking at him mildly. "My dear boy, I don't see why I should be shocked. I can't raise much enthusiasm for the place myself. It isn't a very attractive property, is it?"

Conway was confused. "It isn't, but I'm glad to hear you say so. I'd expected a certain amount of disapproval."

"Yes, I thought you might." Grosling smiled faintly, clipped his pince-nez on more firmly, and looked at Conway with interest. "So you'd like to sell the cinema, is that it? I see. Have you any idea who might want it?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"We've agreed it's an unattractive little property. I was wondering if you had any idea who might be fool enough to take it on."

Conway looked at him blankly. "I didn't think there'd be any difficulty."

Grosling fiddled with some papers before he looked up again. "You know, I asked your father several times before he died why he didn't try to improve the place. His answer was that it was your cinema

and the decision was up to you. He knew you would be in an unsettled frame of mind upon returning to civilian life, and he rather feared you might want to sell out quickly for whatever you could get and lose the money some other way." He took the edge off the words with another little smile. "Do you know what I told him? I told him I didn't think you were fool enough for that. I said, 'The lad must realize it's just so much scrap as it is, and apart from the value of the site, will only fetch scrap prices.' I said, 'I think he'll put his back into it and make something of it, so that when the time is ripe for selling, if he wants to sell, he'll get a reasonable figure.'"

CONWAY was nettled by the elder-statesman tone. "I see. And what could I expect if I did sell now?"

Grosling took off his pince-nez. "Well, it's worth something. The site isn't bad—that alone should fetch four or five thousand. You might get an extra couple for the cinema. You see, it's a liability— whoever took it on as a cinema would have a lot to live down. They'd probably prefer to knock it down and build another. And they wouldn't be able to do that for some years."

"And if I worked it up into anything?"

"I daresay we could get twenty or thirty thousand for a going little concern from one of the big companies."

There was a pause. "That's what you want me to do, is it?" Conway said at last.

Grosling spread his hands. "I'm not going to say. If you approach it in the wrong mood it might easily be a case of throwing good money after bad. It needs a great deal doing to it—and, of course, it's a risk."

Conway was silent for a long time. At last he said: "Well, thanks. I'll think about it."

He stayed. He sat down with

pencil and paper and carefully worked it out. His father had left little money; he needed a lot. With what he could get for the house, and a small, short-term mortgage on the cinema, he would have barely enough for what needed doing. If anything unexpected arose, he would be sunk.

As a first step, he fired the assistant manager and ran the place himself. It was the beginning of an economy drive. While the cinema was closed for the renovations he found himself a cheap flat, reluctantly put off ordering the new suits he had promised himself, and began living on a small, rigid budget.

IT took a year before he felt he was getting anywhere, a year of experimenting with programmes, of carefully watching and listening to his audience. And at the end of it he knew he was going in the right direction. The takings were steadily going up.

He had anticipated paying off the mortgage over three years. By keeping himself on the same small budget he found he would be able to do it in two.

At last, when the mortgage was paid off he went to see Grosling again.

"Well, what do you think of the place now?"

"I haven't been to see it—never have cared for cinemas," Grosling said. "But I like the look of these figures, and I keep my ears open. You've done a first-rate job."

Conway smiled at him. "Might fetch a bit better than scrap prices, eh?"

"It might. It might." Grosling looked at him for a moment and took off his pince-nez. "Still keen to sell?"

"Keener than ever. There's nothing to keep me here. So far as I'm concerned, the cinema is a turkey I'm fattening for Christmas. Christmas can't come soon enough."

Grosling said mildly: "I don't know what your hurry is. You're a young man. Why don't you enjoy yourself a bit, meet a few people, relax?"

"No thanks," Conway said. "I know what I want and I can't waste time."

"All right. We'll make an approach, if you like. We'd better do it pretty discreetly. No point in seeming too anxious. I've been having a word with a friend of mine in London. He'll see that your place comes to the notice of one of the big companies. I understand the usual procedure is for them to send somebody round, very unofficially, to have a look at it. Then, if they're interested, they'll begin negotiations."

"Fine," Conway said, and walked back to the cinema, well pleased with himself. It was a sparkling spring day, and the little town looked almost cheerful. He stopped opposite the cinema and looked at it appraisingly. It bore little resemblance to the squalid wreck of two years ago. In the sharp sunlight it was neat, smart, bustling; a going little concern, indeed. Anyone who looked at it could see that.

They could and did. That day, Conway received his first intimation that others, besides himself and Grosling, were interested in the cinema. It came in the afternoon mail, a letter in block capitals.

The letter said: "Dear Boss, I am writing to tell you how much I like your picture palace, which I visit regular, and to let you know of a plot I heard. Some blokes say they will do up your place, but I think I

can stop them. The only thing is it will cost you 20£ (twenty pounds) a week. One pound notes would be best in a plain envelope. A pal of mine will be waiting at your end of Union Street at ten o'clock on Saturday morning. He knows you. I don't think it will do any good to tell the police because they can't be at your picture palace all the time can they and these blokes are pretty rough and would do up your place out of spite if they heard.—A Pal."

Conway had read the letter quickly. He sat down and read it again, and found the envelope which he had thrown in the wastepaper basket. It was addressed in the same block capitals as the letter, and had been posted in the town's main post office.

At first he had thought it was some sort of joke. Now he was puzzled and uneasy. Who would want to play such a joke on him? Apart from normal business contacts, he had mixed with few people in the town. Indeed, his only real friend was Tich Goddard, an officer he had served with, who was stationed at the barracks on the outskirts of the town. And in the last few months he had lost touch with him. Could this be Tich's idea of a practical joke?

The sudden ringing of the telephone bell made him jump almost out of his seat.

"Hallo."

"Is that you, Boss?"

Conway's scalp prickled unpleasantly. "Who's that?"

"This is a pal. I sent you a letter. . . . Are you there, Boss?"

"Yes," Conway said. His throat had gone dry. "Who are you and what do you want?"

"I thought I'd ring you up in case you thought it was a joke or something about these blokes. It isn't a joke, Boss. And like I said, it's no good going to the police. These blokes are real rough. You ask the Boss of the Tivoli and the Empire. I'm helping them, too."

Conway found his voice suddenly. He said shakily: "Listen, whoever you are, if you're not off the line in ten seconds—"

"Ere," the voice said indignantly, "I'm your pal. I'm trying to help you. You better not do anything rash. Just ask the Boss of the Tivoli—"

Conway hung up. His hands were trembling and he was breathing hard. He sat staring at the phone for a few moments, and then he lit a cigarette and reached for the letter again. It told him nothing new. His first thought had been to ring up the police at once, but he was unpleasantly aware now that there was something in what the voice had said; the police couldn't be in the building all the time.

HE sat for a long time staring at the letter, and then he reached for the telephone and dialled the Tivoli.

Poultney was an oldish, stout, hail-fellow-well-met sort of chap, whom Conway had met a few times at trade shows. He said: "Hallo, Conway, hallo. How are things? Taking all my business, ha-ha-ha?"

"Mustn't grumble," Conway said briefly. "I rang up to ask if anyone's trying a protection racket on you?"

"What?"

"A protection racket. Run by a man who calls himself Pal—P-A-L."

There was a pause. Poultney said, in a different tone: "Yes, yes, I think I know who you mean."

"I see," Conway said slowly. "I



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thought you might. Would you be interested in taking any action about him?"

There was another pause. "Well, it depends," Poultney said cautiously. "I think we'd better talk it over privately."

"I was about to suggest that. I'd like to talk to Benjamin—I believe he's in this, too. What about making it in my office tomorrow afternoon?"

"All right," Poultney said. He didn't sound too enthusiastic.

Conway said briskly: "Fine. I'll ring you back."

REFLECTING on it later, Conway knew that it was the tone of that meeting more than anything else that decided his course of action. He had called the meeting to seek information and advice. But from the start he realized the atmosphere was subtly against him. The two men seemed to expect criticism and rashness from him; and, against his will, he found himself filling the rôle they had allotted him.

He found himself saying: "Of course, you realize this is just pure blackmail."

"It's demanding money with menaces," Poultney said, "and probably a dozen other wicked things, too. I know all about that, son. And if I was a bloody big fella with a chain of picture houses from Land's End to John o' Groats, I'd put the police on 'em sharp, and I'd beat 'em. But I'm not. And you're not. That's why they pick on us. So what other ideas have you got?"

He was growing a little angry, and in the silence, little Benjamin said wearily: "He's right, Conway. We daren't risk it. As soon as a place starts to get a bad name, people stop coming. A cinema can go to the dogs quicker than any other business—you ought to know that. And in a matter like that, the police can't help."

"You can refuse admittance."

"That's right," Poultney said. "You do that, Conway." He looked at his watch. "Come round and have a drink some time and let me know how you're going on."

As they went, Benjamin said: "You know, Conway, they're not crazy, these roughnecks. They know how much they can ask. I look on it as an insurance premium. You insure against other risks; why not against that? Be a sensible chap, now. I don't want to see you go under. There's room for us all here."

"O.K.," Conway said. "I'll think about it."

"That's right," Benjamin said. "That's right."

It wasn't right. It was all flaming wrong, Conway realized as he stood looking out of the window after they'd gone. He couldn't think about it now. His mind had been made up for him. He'd have to fight. And with the ticklish negotiations for the sale of the cinema going on, it was madness to fight. He swore suddenly, gave the wastepaper basket a vicious kick, picked up his hat, and went out for a walk.

He had half decided to go and see Grosling. He changed his mind. He didn't want Grosling's cautious advice. Instead, he teetered around outside the police station for a while, and then, changing his mind again, walked briskly and purposefully back to the cinema. The briskness was to raise his morale. He still had no idea at all of what he was going to do.

On Saturday morning, Conway fought the temptation to go out and have a look at the money collector. He stayed in his office, restless and

nervy, waiting for the phone to ring. At half past ten it did.

"Hallo."

"Is that you, Boss?"

Conway hung up.

He hung up again on Monday, and he hung up on Tuesday. He had come to one decision. He did not want any contact with the Blokes. Silence might worry them a bit. It might even put them off. No one, after all, had tried to call their bluff before.

It didn't put them off. The full dress show came on Wednesday. Conway had stood in the box office all the week, scrutinizing the customers. He saw nothing suspicious.

The trouble started as soon as the main feature began. From all over

he fell over sideways. He was picked up swiftly and dragged into an alley.

"O.K., you can get up now, Boss."

Conway lay still, feigning unconsciousness. A foot touched him quite gently, turning him. The voice said again: "Get up, Boss. You're not out."

In the background, Conway sensed other men, the slight sound of bodies shifting. The voice said something softly, and he felt a sudden vicious kick in the ear. Unable to check the movement, his hands came up.

The voice said curtly: "I said get up. Or do you want us to kick you awake?"

Conway opened his eyes, blinking

the voice said: "Is he awake yet?"

"Don't look like it."

A hand slapped his face. "Boss, Boss."

The torch was pressed close to his face, the eyelids turned back. He couldn't stop himself screwing up his eyes.

The voice said, reproachfully: "You're putting it on again, Boss. He's a hard case, ain't he?"

Conway opened his eyes blearily. His head was thumping away painfully.

"There's eleven quid here, Boss," the voice said. "That's nine you owe us. We don't charge overtime." In the background the Blokes guffawed quietly. "Twenty-nine quid from you next week, old timer. O.K.?"

Conway grunted.

"Good-oh. Now we know where we are. Remember, top of Union Street, next Saturday—got that?"

Conway grunted again.

"He don't talk much," the voice said. "He won't talk to me at all on the phone sometimes. . . . Well, good night, Boss. I should have a little rest before you get up if I was you." And then the kick. Conway had been expecting it, but he could not prevent himself moaning as it caught him on the side of the chin and flung him again, scrabbling and floundering and exploding with pain, into the dark, muddy depths of unconsciousness.

He was alone when he woke again. He lay back looking up at the dark sky for a few minutes, before getting slowly to his feet. His head was rocking with pain, and blood was coming from his mouth. He staggered up the alley into the side street and then, unaware of where he was going, went back on to the main road, swaying from side to side of the pavement like a drunk.

The street looked enormously long and quiet and deserted, and suddenly he felt he could not keep on his feet. Stumbling into the gutter, he lowered himself to the kerbside and, feeling weak as a kitten, sat there for a few minutes, hoping a cab would come along.

FAR up the road, a car's headlights appeared. They were approaching fast. He lurched to his feet and began waving his arms. The car slowed and stopped. It was a jeep Conway saw as he swayed towards it, and a soldier was driving.

"Want a lift?"

"Yes, please."

"Which way—blimey, have you been in a fight?"

Conway sat down again, suddenly, in the road. His legs had buckled underneath him. The driver got out and helped him in.

They did not talk much on the way back to Conway's flat, but as the soldier helped him to find his key, Conway asked a question: he had been thinking about it all the time in the jeep. He said: "Have you a Captain Goddard at the barracks still?"

"Captain Goddard? Yes, he is still with us. He's in charge of a course."

"Not a toughening-up course?"

"That's right." The man looked at him curiously. "Know him, do you?"

"Yes, I know him." Conway smiled. It hurt him to smile, but in his dazed state the appositeness of Tich's job struck him with all the hilarious unreality of a whiff of laughing gas.

He thanked the soldier for his help, let himself in, and examined his



the house there were long yawns, catcalls, exaggerated kissing noises. The wide distribution of the trouble worried him. He had expected it to come from one spot. He walked quickly round the house, uncertain of what to do. A good deal of shushing was going on, and the audience was becoming restive. He didn't want to add to the general annoyance by flashing his torch about. And obviously he was being watched. Whenever he came near, the catcalls stopped from that part of the house.

Conway knew seats would be ripped, but apart from holding everyone in their seats while he inspected, there was little he could do.

THERE were sixteen seats ripped. They were not badly ripped. The damage was, Conway thought, more in the nature of a warning. He sent the girls home, locked up, and walked home, brooding. The Blokes meant business. He couldn't continue this by himself. He wasn't fighting, anyway; he was merely putting himself up as an Aunt Sally. It was time for him either to bring in the police or to give in.

He had reached this point in his assessment of the situation, when it took a turn for the worse.

Turning off the main road into a side street, he found a powerful torch switched on him suddenly, and at the same time something hit him on the head. As he fell to his knees, stunned, a boot caught him under the chin and in blinding pain

in the light of the torch, and slowly pulled himself to his feet. His head was singing, and his jaw felt as if it was broken.

"Up against the wall."

He stepped backwards slowly, and now, behind the beam of the torch, he could make out the outline of a huddle of men.

"That's it. And don't get any silly ideas, Boss. There won't be a copper along for a good half hour. Let's take this quietly, shall we?"

"What is this?" Conway said. He was breathing noisily, and his mouth seemed to be full of plums. Behind the glare of the torch, the little huddle of men had closed in.

"It's just a little talk, Boss. The blokes reckon I can't have explained it right. They wanted to see for themselves."

Conway jumped. He had raised one foot up behind him against the wall, and now he catapulted himself at the torch and managed to grab it. It was a quick, unexpected movement, and in the beam, as it swung round, he caught sight of the man holding it, and two or three of the men round him. That was the only result. The Blokes piled on him at once. It was a short, vicious business, and this time he went down and out.

He must have been out for only a moment or two, for when he came to the torch beam was still on him and a hand was in his breast pocket, fumbling for his wallet. He kept his eyes shut. He heard them counting the notes in a soft mutter. Then

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injuries carefully in the bathroom.
They were painful, but not serious.
Winning a little, he attended to them
and then went to bed. He lay awake
for a long time, but it was not the
physical discomfort that kept him
from sleep. He had a lot of thinking
to do. He was wondering when he
would meet the Bokes again. He
hoped it would be soon. He was
smiling again when he fell asleep.

CONWAY telephoned to the barracks
the next day and that evening he
had a drink with Tich Goddard
at a nearby pub. After explaining
the situation, he put to him certain
proposals.

Tich thought about them for a
long while. Then he said: "It's a
damn ticklish business, old boy.
Could lead to all sorts of trouble,
civil and military. I'm not at all
sure I ought to know anything about
it."

Conway grinned at him. "Of
course you mustn't."

It took a little while for that to
sink in, and then Tich said: "Right,
so long as we know where we are.
Let's get down to business."

Conway made two more trips to
the pub that week and had an
interesting conversation with a
stolid, poker-faced sergeant. He also
made a purchase. The Bokes had
given him till next Saturday to pay;
that meant, presumably, that there
would be no trouble till the following
week. His preparations were
leisurely.

On the following Monday, he
called the usherettes up to his office
and gave them some instructions.

The Bokes arrived on the Tues-
day. He didn't know how many of
them there were, but two of the
men he had spotted in the alley
arrived together. He gave no sign
that he had seen them, but as soon
as they had passed through the doors
he went upstairs to his office and
made a telephone call; then he went
into the hall and had a quiet word
with each of the usherettes.

The main feature would not begin
for forty minutes. It was unlikely
the trouble would start until then.
There was plenty of time. He walked
round the hall slowly, feeling very
good.

Then, feeling that he had earned a
drink, he went out to the pub and
had one. He took a parcel with him.
The place seemed to be unusually full
of soldiers.

In the next half-hour, quite a few
people arrived at the cinema. Any-
one more interested in the composi-
tion of the audience than in the film
might have noticed that they were
mainly soldiers, and that though they
arrived in twos and threes their seats
seemed to be specially reserved for
them. They were, in every case, at
the end of a row—at each end of
each row.

Conway stood pressed against a
wall. In the gloom he picked out two
of the Bokes sitting together, and he
kept his eyes on them.

The Bokes took time to warm
up. The main film was on ten
minutes before one of them stretched
himself luxuriously and emitted a
long, loud yawn. The other promptly
followed suit.

At once, the soldier on each end of
the row rose, moved down the row
towards the pair, courteously asking
the people on each side to move up.
The same discreet shifting was taking
place elsewhere, Conway noticed.
But he kept his eyes on the two men
he knew. He didn't want to miss a
moment of it.

The Bokes didn't seem to suspect
they were hemmed in, but they were

quiet for a while, until the new-
comers had settled down. And then,
keeping to the old routine, they went
into their yawning act again. If the
film was too slow for them, the
events of the next few moments were
plainly too quick. There was a swift
movement, a slight click, and each
Boke held up before his startled eyes
his own handcuffed wrist.

Conway didn't hear what the
soldiers said, for it was said softly,
but the effect was immediate. There
was a faint, rebellious mutter, a long
look between the two men, and then
silence. He watched them for several
minutes. Their new absorption in the
film was impressive.

He walked softly round the hall,
noting the others, and the same rapt
silence, and then he went upstairs.
In his office, he pushed the desk to
the window to leave the centre of the
room clear, and then set out several
bottles and a few dozen glasses.

The film was just finishing as he
slipped back into the hall, and he
watched as the audience rose,
blinking in the light, and stood for
the National Anthem.

Conway edged his way down the
aisle and smiled at the Bokes stand-
ing dwarfed, bewildered and appre-
hensive between the two hefty
soldiers. Here and there about the
hall were similar little islands of
dejection.

Conway gently touched the arm of
one of the soldiers. "You know the
drill," he said softly. "Up in my
office. I'll be up presently. Help
yourself to the drinks."

AND then, after seeing the audience
and the staff off the premises, he
locked the outer doors and ran
upstairs, whistling.

The corridor was full of troops, all
drinking convivially, and thirty of
them had managed to squeeze into
the office. The Bokes were there,
unhandcuffed and looking rather
frightened. There were sixteen of
them.

"Well," said Conway, "so here we
all are. Enjoy the show?"

The man who called himself Pal
said a rude word.

"I don't want to get angry with
you," Conway said, "though you're
plainly asking for a thick ear, and
I can't guarantee not to give you one."
He poured himself a drink, and sat
down on the desk. "Now then,
you're all business men—even if not
very efficient ones—so we won't
waste too much time on formalities.
The bill for repairing the seats—he
felt in his pocket for it—"will cost
you thirty-five pounds. The assault
on me should cost you a lot more,
but we'll call it twenty. That's fifty-
five quid. And for the trouble you've
caused me generally, say twenty-five
pounds. It looks as if you've got a

trading loss of eighty pounds in all."

The Bokes didn't appear to have
grasped the situation. Open-
mouthed, they goggled at him.

"Come on," said Conway testily.
"And you can turn out your pockets,
while you're at it. I'll want your
names and addresses and so forth, in
case of any other trouble you might
think of causing."

The Bokes had forty-three pounds
ten between them. Conway took it.
"Thirty-six pounds ten owing," he
said. "I'll want it delivered here in
two days."

Then, they were escorted down-
stairs, Conway unlocked a side door,
and one by one he helped them on
their way with a kick that left him
quite tired.

GROSLING listened to his story
calmly, polishing his glasses and
chuckling from time to time. At
the end he said: "Very ingenious, my
boy, and I'm sure most commend-
able, but, you know, you could have
saved yourself a great deal of
trouble."

"How do you mean?"

"I'm very pleased to tell you we've
had an offer for your cinema."

Conway looked at him. "That's
damn quick work, isn't it? I only
told you to go ahead just over a
week ago."

"Precisely. I doubt if my col-
league has yet started things rolling."
Grosling smiled at him. "This is
quite unsolicited."

Conway said bluntly: "How
much?"

"They didn't say in their letter,
but I've been on the telephone to
London this morning. I understand
they'd be prepared to go to some-
thing like thirty-five thousand."

Conway was silent for a long time.
Grosling said: "I thought it would
bowl you over. I must say I was
delighted myself."

Conway said at last: "I just
wanted to know." He smiled oddly
at the solicitor. "It isn't every day
a man can turn down an offer like
that."

Grosling stared at him. "My dear
boy, you're not turning it down?"
His pince-nez had fallen askew in
his amazement.

Conway laughed at him. "If the
place is worth that much to them, I
suppose it's worth it to me. You
know, one way and another, I'm
beginning to like this town. But what
it needs is a bit of organization. Old
Poultney and Benjamin won't last for
ever—they've got no fight in them."

"I don't understand this," Gros-
ling said, straightening his glasses,
shaking his head. "I don't pretend
to understand it at all."

"It's easy," Conway said, grin-
ning. "You could say that I'm
getting ambitious." THE END

NOW YOU KNOW

FATHER will enjoy his
festive cigar better if he
knows the best way to smoke it.
Before lighting up, remove the
band. Now, cut off the end—
you should never pierce a cigar
—and light up evenly with a
match. Allow the cigar to cool
a little before smoking.

Take the cigar out of your
mouth when talking, and resist
chewing the end. And don't
keep knocking off the ash; this
only makes the cigar too hot



and spoils the flavour and
aroma.

Should it be necessary to
relight—and it really shouldn't
—blow through the cigar to
remove the dead ash.

FRIENDLY EYE ON THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS

Continued from page 16

carvers. There is nothing he can do but admonish them. "Their usual answer," he says, "is, 'Well, other people do it, so why shouldn't we?' I have an answer, of course, and I give them a good dressing-down, but still it goes on. Perhaps it always will."

Once, to his horror, he found a woman smoking beside the altar in the nave. Woodliffe asked her to put her cigarette out. The woman asked why. Woodliffe told her why. "In that case you should put up 'no smoking' notices," she said, and walked out with great dignity. "A richly dressed lady, too," says Woodliffe when he painfully recalls the occasion. "A mother, I should think. She should have known better."

Most visitors, he finds, are well behaved, and the parties he leads round are anxious for knowledge. Schoolchildren are always eager to see Thomas à Becket's bloodstains. "Even teachers have asked me about them," says Woodliffe. "Somebody ought to make it clear in the school history books that there are no stains."

On an average, Woodliffe walks twenty miles a week around the cathedral, but although he confesses it is hard on the feet, and is glad when his long day is over, he would not change his job for any other. In many cathedrals a verger's job is hereditary, but he himself achieved his present position after a business

career on the London Corn Exchange. An ex-officer of the Middlesex Regiment in the first World War, he decided after an illness to find a job in quieter surroundings and applied for a post as head verger in Carlisle Cathedral.

He was there for six years, organized the service to celebrate the eight hundredth anniversary, and was soon an expert in the stately day-to-day routine of "running" a great cathedral. From Carlisle he went in 1936 to Windsor as a sacrist

at St. George's. That is a period of which Vesturer Woodliffe is very proud. From his house in Horseshoe Cloister he often saw the Royal Family. "We felt just as if they were our neighbours," he says, "just one of us."

There were great occasions in Windsor, too—the procession of members of the Order of the Garter in 1937, Coronation Year; the funeral of Prince Arthur of Connaught, with the coffin descending impressively, worked by a secret lift



"I wonder if anybody's run into the goldfish yet"

below, through the aperture in the floor of the richly hung choir. There was the "family gossip" from the Castle about the Abdication and then, later, the first appearance in the Royal Chapel of George VI and his Queen. After that the Royal Family came regularly.

Woodliffe remembers the two leggy young Princesses, and the time the King forgot his collection money; he searched in his pockets and whispered something to the Queen, who frowned. But the Princesses were ready with their offering, holding their money tightly in their hands until Woodliffe moved to them with the plate.

After the second World War, in which he served in the Pioneer Corps before being invalided out, he was appointed to Canterbury. Now Vesturer Woodliffe is a landmark. Overseas visitors write to him for news of the cathedral.

If Woodliffe is haunted by anything it is by a coin—sixpence. It is still a mystery to him that most people look upon sixpence as quite enough to put in the collection plate, even at a special service. Counting these at the end of the day may take Woodliffe and his assistant as long as an hour and a half behind the locked doors in the Treasury. Larger coins, he feels, would make his job easier—and also please the cathedral authorities, who have to find £7,500 a year to keep the cathedral open to all who pass by.

"People will pay ten shillings to hear Sir Adrian Boult conduct an orchestra in a concert hall," he says. "Yet when he played here, they gave their usual sixpence. It mystifies me. It really does." THE END

I LOVED A WICKED CITY

Continued from page 20

thought Tatung, like Peking, had a Russian colony. Next day, Nick took her back to Tsien-Tsien. The furniture was redistributed, his belongings placed back in his small room and the set of china returned for a refund.

Despite his hard luck, Nick did not give up. A year later, he announced that this time he really was going to marry. Nothing could prevent it. The girl was the original one from Harbin, who was now working in Shanghai.

We at the hospital had learned our lesson, however, and bought no presents, made no preparations. Time enough for that, we felt, if the marriage went through.

Nick went to Tsien-Tsien, where the marriage was to be, and, visiting a Russian club, ran into an old friend from Harbin.

"What are you doing here?" they said, simultaneously. They discovered that they had come to marry the same girl who, foolishly, had written to both, intending to compare them and make her choice at the last minute. The friends, incensed, decided that neither would marry her after a trick like that. Nick's wedding was off again.

In August of 1935, I received a printed invitation for the fourth of Nick's announced weddings-to-be. "Oh, Nick's having another try," I smiled. I was sure something would happen to stop the ceremony, even at the altar itself. But the marriage took place on schedule. She was a lovely, dark-haired girl, almost as tall as Nick. Helen and I became great friends. It was a great relief to us all at the hospital that Nick had finally made it. Now we could turn our full attention to other problems.

One day, Mrs. Li stopped me on

the hospital compound. "Miss Ball, have you seen those blue vases that Dr. Li had?" she asked. "Do you know if he's got them in his room at the hospital?"

"I did see them there some time ago, but I thought he must have taken them to your home," I replied. She turned her head away. "Ah, but they've gone now."

I suspected nothing, but she must have known more than I did. Some days later, a Salvation Army officer came to call on me. "Have you seen the notice in the Tatung paper?" he asked. "It's about a man suing Dr. Li for having stolen his wife."

Gambled For Woman

I had not. I was shocked. I had noticed that Mrs. Li had been crying again, but when I asked her what was wrong, she merely said: "I've been lonely." Then I heard that Dr. Li had won the woman at a game of Mah Jongg. I knew he had gone too far. Screwing up my courage, I went to see him.

"Dr. Li, I hear that there is a report in the local newspaper of a probable court case against you."

He did not turn a hair. "Oh, I don't think it will come to anything," he said. "I have spoken to my friend General Chao and he will see the judge and arrange that the case will never come up."

Now I had to be more blunt. "I hear that some of the foreign missionaries know of your gambling and the cause of your lawsuit. I feel that I must write to the bishop about it, but I wanted to speak to you first. Is there anything you would like to say?"

"Only that my private life has nothing to do with the hospital."

"Don't you see?" I persisted. "As superintendent of the hospital you

should set a good example to the staff. Couldn't you possibly change your attitude so I could tell the bishop it won't happen again?"

He looked full at me. Then, quite sadly, he said: "I'm afraid, Miss Ball, that this business has gone past recall." I did not know at the time that he had bought a compound in the city and had established the woman there as his wife. It was to this new household that he had taken the missing blue vases.

Reluctantly, I wrote to the bishop. He replied: "Would you tell Francis Li to come to Peking and see me?" Later, I heard that the bishop had tried to get Francis to mend his ways.

"I have done wrong according to the church ruling," Francis replied, "but I have done it; and now I have to stand by it." He resigned his post as superintendent. Later he accepted charge of a small emergency hospital run by the Tatung Coal Mining Administration in the hills twenty miles south of the city. Just before I went on leave in 1936, I heard that he had left the mine hospital and had set up practice in the city. I missed him a great deal for, with all his faults, he had been an excellent surgeon and a good friend.

I did not return to China until September, 1937. China and Japan were at war and Tatung had been captured. When I got back to the hospital, Japanese troops were using the ground floor, having rented it for 300 Chinese dollars a month. They had thrown out all the beds there and had placed mattresses, side to side, along the floor. They had set up a

field kitchen in a tent in the hospital garden. The peace and progress of the years since the siege had gone. The presence of the Japanese made a shambles of our efficiency, especially since their doctors persisted in getting horribly drunk and, when in that state, tried to go upstairs to molest our girl nurses.

I was their matron and had to protect them. I stood on guard at the top of the stairs when I heard them roistering. Soon, they would lurch up; and as the first one reached the top, I pushed him suddenly and he toppled back against the others. It was very trying for me, but I managed to keep them off time after time. I was overjoyed when, in January, they decided to leave. The hospital was ours again. But not for long.

Bishop Was Threatened

Presently the Japanese decided that they wanted the hospital entirely for their own use. They offered to buy it. Bishop Norris came up from Peking to deal with them. He was bewildered by their inability to understand that the hospital did not belong to him personally, but to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. One night, a group of Japanese officials came while he and I were having supper.

"Excuse me, Miss Ball," the bishop sighed. "I had better go and see them." He went into the next room. Soon I heard angry shouts and then the insistent thumping on a table with the butt of a pistol. "Will you sell or will you not sell?" I heard a Japanese roar angrily. This went on for more than an hour, during which I prayed that the bishop would keep his temper. I was afraid that if he did not they would shoot him.

When he came back to where I

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

The photograph on page 24 is of Mai Zetterling when a child.

BE QUICK for the PARTY!

Prizes value over £1,000 include last six invitations

£500 1st PRIZE
CASH PLUS
CELEBRATION WEEKEND

£50 plus CELEBRATION
£25 plus CELEBRATION



THRILLS FOR OUR GUESTS

Winners, each with companion, will be invited to JOHN BULL'S New Year celebration party in London. Arrangements include sightseeing tour with Johnny Goodbullet, the *Bullets* bulldog—aeroplane flight over London, visit to Olympia Fun Fair with side-show expenses paid, box seats for Bertram Mills Circus and New Year celebration party with a thrilling round of entertainments and New Year gifts for all.

2 of £10, 5 of £5, 10 of £2.10s.

each plus **NEW YEAR HAMPER**
30 NEW YEAR HAMPER
2,000 "GOOD SHOT" PRIZES
BONUSES value £2

A £2 *Bullets* Season Ticket accompanies each of the New Year Hampers won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross / & Co., write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fee not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests (in *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated January 26, and in JOHN BULL dated February 2), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

Next week—Giant First and
THREE WISHES!

"A WONDERFUL weekend, packed with thrills and good companionship!" was the verdict of Mrs. E. Harrison, a Mansfield reader, on her weekend in London with *Bullets* New Year Party of 1951.

An even more thrilling weekend has been planned for JOHN BULL'S guests in January, 1952. In this, the final *Bullets* offer of 1951, the £500 First and other chief cheques are accompanied by the last six invitations to the *Bullets* New Year Party.

They may be twelve tough months for Britain which begin at midnight next Monday—but not nearly so tough for you if you let *Bullets* add interest and entertainment to each day's leisure moments and glorious possibilities to every tomorrow.

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the Examples below. To use an incomplete Example, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Britannia's Larder
We Admire
Truth's Torch
It's A Big Job, But
Wicked Waste
To Check Inflation
Wearily
Manners Maketh Man, So
The Safest Place
His Slippers
With A Freezing Look
Councillor Dad
Getting Particular
At The Circus
"Never Again!"
A Rare Specimen
Unearthed
Out Of A Tin
Begging For Mercy
Olga, The Beautiful Spy
Incomplete "Examples"—
see instructions

Woman With A.....
Not Used To.....
Made.....Jealous
.....Of The Underworld
Tested The.....
Wouldn't.....Smile If

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,815 (or Xword 767), "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)



Here, at the 1951 New Year Party, *Bullets* winners and their friends are toasting Johnny Goodbullet, the famous and very live *Bullets* bulldog

"Bullets" Winners 1,811

FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Hamper: G. W. Scragg, 27 Edenfield Road, Liverpool:

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS, ISN'T "FUN ALONE."

£50 plus Hamper: Miss N. Holme, 12 Leighton Street, Moston, Manchester: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR—GEORGE'S "FIGHT"—ELIZABETH'S "CONQUEST." £25 plus Hamper: E. F. Robertson, Milestone Road, Carterton, Oxford: WITH STALIN'S WHIP—CAN OUR "CARROTS" COMPETE?

OTHER AWARDS. £20: C. Day, 79 Rowheath Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham: IN THE SMALL HOURS—"RUSTLING"—CHRISTMAS DAWN, "STAMPEDE." £15: L. Watson, 2A Claramount Road, Langley, Hleanor: THE FUTURE—BLEAK, IF "MEEK"

WEAK. £10: E. J. Brown, 34 Shakespeare Street, Watford: SOMEWHERE IN MONS—DUNKIRK, KOREA—GRANNY'S THOUGHTS. £9: C. Brandt, 47 Milford Estate, Harpenden: BLOWING HOT AND COLD—WHALE THAT SWALLOWED PLUMBER! £8: Mrs. R. Jamieson, 68 High Street, Lochwinnoch, Renfrew: VERY CONVENIENT—"SHELTER." BEHIND LABOUR'S "DEBRIS"? £7: R. R. Chaplin, 20 Amphill Road, Maulden, Beds: CONFIRMED BACHELOR—CLINGING TO "FRYING-PAN." £6: A. Anderson, 3 School Street, Drayton, Daventry: WITH STALIN'S INSTRUMENTS—DIFFICULT DRAWING "TRUCE LINE." (Above seven winners each also receives Hamper.)

For five winners of £5 plus Hamper and five of £2.10s. plus Hamper, see "Bullets" Bulletin.

Winners of 200 Fowls have been notified, and 2,000 "Good Shot" Awards have been posted.

FOWLS AND PUDDINGS FOR XWORDS!

This Way To Win
FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter one extra Answer to any one, two or three Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues XWORD 767

- Teacher of life class in art school regards correct this of model as very important
- Election speeches should not be this by passion
- One hates to think of little kiddies left to cry out in this
- Its attractiveness rests in its colour
- It probably will reduce an actor's confidence if he doesn't get his
- There's one kind of this that brings in no money
- Flowers may improve the appearance of shabby old one

Down Clues

- Average woman doesn't like to be told that she does this
- Giving of this can be a sign of satisfaction
- Is often more of a nuisance than a help to gardener
- Detectives know what it is to be this
- Your fishmonger isn't always able to supply his customers with
- Best-sellers may very often do this in their novels
- Keeper at Zoo must occasionally have some difficulty keeping this under control
- It's important that you should get this just right

£100 1ST PRIZE
CASH PLUS

FINE FAMILY FEAST
for £100 winner or each sharer
AWARDS VALUE £25
amongst 1st Runners-up and
FINE 5lb. FOWLS

AND
PLUM PUDDINGS

—a complete Family Feast with each prize value £1 or over
UP TO 500 "SIGNPOST" PRIZES
—one for each 2nd Runner-up

XWORD 763 RESULT

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1. Coal. 3. Wires. 6. Grate. 9. The. 12. Villa. 13. Man. 14. Cool. DOWN: 2. Lazy. 3. Weeks. 4. Ride. 5. Skill. 7. Trial. 8. Medal. 10. Way. 11. Tell.

TWO £100 SHARERS (entries differing at one point only from Competitors' Answers above): Mrs. O. G. Allen, 115 Bury Street, Stowmarket, Suffolk; Mrs. A. Browning, 7 Park Place, Newbridge, Mon.

For entries differing at two points only, 40 entrants share awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up, each receiving Xmas Fowl and Pudding in addition. "Signpost" Prizes awarded to 2nd Runners-up.

waited he looked very tired. He was not a young man. Shaking his head wearily, he said: "I cannot understand them. Don't they know that if they shout at me all night I am still in the same position? I cannot sell the hospital." A day or two later he returned to Peking.

"If you are worried at any time," he said at parting, "telegraph me and I will come." When he left, I was the only English person remaining in Tatum. Soon the staff nurses, terrified by the obvious hostility of the Japanese, left. Most of the patients followed them. Finally, the S.P.G. at home decided that the position in Tatum was untenable. They agreed to accept £3,000 compensation—a ridiculously small amount—from the Japanese Government and pass over the hospital to them.

Suspected Of Spying

On February 18, 1941, I handed over to the Japanese. I was broken-hearted. It looked as if all our years of work had been for nothing. There seemed no chance that we would return. I moved into Tatum as an evangelist, but even then the Japanese kept a strict watch over me.

They said I could have no cook—and I had none. Shop assistants were prevented from serving me. The children stopped coming to my Bible classes—having been "criticized" for doing so by the Japanese masters. Helen, Nick's wife, told me that they suspected me of spying. Then a notice was posted on the walls of the city. "Anyone found serving any British person or taking him in a rickshaw will be liable to punishment." Since I was the only British person in the city, it was obvious at whom it was being aimed.

Late one night, towards the end of July, I was sitting alone in my room. It had been raining all day, and now a heavy quiet seemed to hang over the dark city. I heard a dog barking, suddenly, at the gate. Bolts slid back on the gate and it squeaked on its rusty hinges.

Dr. Li's Warning

Out of the window I saw a dark figure, carrying a hurricane lamp, hurrying up the walk. I thought: It's the Japanese again. But as he approached I could see the caller was far too tall for a Japanese. He came to the front door and tapped softly on the glass. I opened the door. It was Francis Li!

"Oh, Dr. Li, do come in. Come in quickly!" His cape was wet with the recent rain. It had taken great courage for him to come in defiance of the Japanese. He entered and stood on the mat, looking anxious and drawn.

"I won't take my raincoat off," he said, "but I could not rest until I had been able to see you and to urge you to go to Peking as soon as possible. This is no place for you, Miss Ball. Go, and do not come back."

Then he slipped quietly away into the night.

NEXT WEEK: Life in a Japanese prison camp. We rebuild our war-torn hospital

JOHN BULL FREE INSURANCE

Registered readers are notified that JOHN BULL'S Free Insurance Gift will continue in force, with the same benefits and conditions as apply at present, until December 31, 1952, unless previously terminated or amended by publication of notice in JOHN BULL. Registered readers automatically qualify for the benefits of the scheme. They need not re-register. But if any change of address or newsagent has taken place, full details must be sent to JOHN BULL Insurance Department, 128 Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

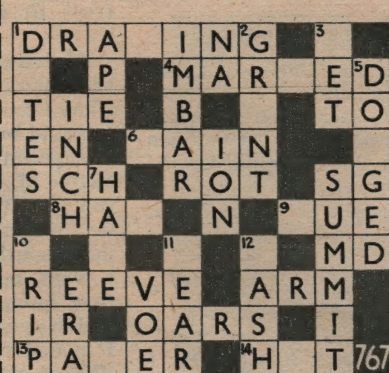
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APPLY on this COUPON for "BULLETS" and CROSSWORD GUIDE
With this coupon (which you can enclose with your entry) send P.O. is. for six weeks' *Bulletin* and *Gazette* at REDUCED SERIES RATE—first copy dated January 19. If requiring single copy only, affix 2d. stamp below.

P.O. is. No.

For introductory copy of <i>Bulletin</i> and <i>Gazette</i> dated January 19	NAME
STICK 2d. STAMP HERE	ADDRESS

FINAL FEASTS with THIS WEEK'S PRIZES



CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
No.		1s.
No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

Puzzle and form strictly copyright 767 Closing Postmark MON., JAN. 7

I enclose P.O. value..... No.

Signed

Address

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to one Clue will represent two full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to two Clues will represent four full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.). Square with one extra Answer to three Clues will represent eight full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated Jan 19.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

Great News
for all Boys
and Girls!

THIS WONDERFUL MODEL CIRCUS CUT-OUT FREE!



... in the enlarged
New Year issue of Mickey Mouse Weekly

£50
CASH PRIZES
and over

1,000
CONSOLATION PRIZES
in a

FREE
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COMPETITION

All youngsters love a circus! So what a thrill for your children to find a circus of their very own—**FREE**—in **MICKEY MOUSE WEEKLY's** New Year issue! There's a complete model circus to cut out and make, the ring and all the performers—clowns, trapeze artists, ring-master, strong man, fortune-teller and animals. Here's hours

of fun and pleasure for boys and girls of all ages—and it's only one of many good things in this 16-page New Year issue.

There's also a new **Enid Blyton** serial; a new character "**The Pied Piper**"; all the **Disney** favourites and many other exciting characters; and the famous **Jungle Club** to join. Give your children a great treat by placing a standing order with your newsagent for Britain's best value colour weekly in 1952—starting with this big special issue.

MICKEY MOUSE WEEKLY

OUT TUESDAY, JANUARY 1st - 4d.



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